

**Knowledge Sharing in Nkangala District Municipality**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

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I declare that the dissertation titled *Knowledge sharing in Nkangala District Municipality* submitted to the University of South Africa has not been submitted previously for any degree, at this or another university. It is original in design and in execution and all reference material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.



26 February 2019

**Signature**

**Date**

**Ms: L Makhanya**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my late father, Lucas Mzilikazi Makhanya and my mother Phyllis Nonhlanhla Makhanya. Though my father did not have the opportunity to go to school, he instilled the value of education in us. I wish you could have lived just a bit longer to witness this great achievement. I love you Nsongomnyama.

To my wonderful husband, Ambrose Velaphi Mnisi: Thank you for your understanding, sacrifice, unconditional love and support. I would not have gone this far without you. Ngiyabonga Manyovu.

I also dedicate this work to my children, Ayanda, Thembelihle, S'yabonga, Mpendulo and Minenhle. I hope this achievement will motivate you to be determined to achieve the best in life, regardless of any circumstances.

To my only sister Nontokozo Makhanya: this is ours! Our pride. Let us continue this academic race and achieve more!

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to investigate knowledge practices in Nkangala District Municipality (NDM), situated in the Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. The objective of the study was to discover NDM managers' level of understanding participation and establish any challenges of knowledge sharing in NDM. This study employed qualitative research method. An interview guide was designed to collect data through in-depth interviews. To determine the number of participants for the interview, stratified and purposive sampling methods were used. The study established that there is little knowledge and understanding of the knowledge sharing concept by NDM managers, hence, it is not formally recognised by the institution. However, managers acknowledged that knowledge sharing could play a huge role in improving service delivery. The study recommends that NDM should consider introducing the knowledge sharing concept, through the establishment of a knowledge sharing section. A culture of knowledge sharing could be developed through the development of knowledge sharing policies, which should be aligned to the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process of NDM. In addition, the study recommends an upgrade on the existing ICT infrastructure and internet connection, especially in rural municipalities. This will ensure that ICT fully supports knowledge sharing activities. The study suggested that an additional study is conducted to establish knowledge sharing practices among the lower level staff members of NDM.

**Key words:** Information Communication Technology (ICT), Knowledge sharing, knowledge sharing practices, municipalities, Nkangala District Municipality,

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Knowledge sharing is important in municipalities for various reasons (Dikotla 2014:855). These include improved municipal performance by means of innovation, quality enhancement, and increased productivity and effectiveness (Ncoyini & Cilliers 2013:574). It is a vital component in improving the quality of service delivery and assistance in the creation and fulfilment of public policies (Msomi 2015:15). Knowledge sharing is at the centre of municipal governance processes, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal and human rights, meet their obligations, and mitigate their differences (Ncoyini & Cilliers 2014:3).

Like most large organisations, municipalities respond to the needs of their citizens by providing an inclusive and far-reaching service delivery (South African Local Government Association (SALGA) 2015:17). Therefore, the strategic use of information and knowledge to improve service delivery and financial performance has become a key skill for managers in this sector (Institute for Security Studies. 2009:31). Relevancy of knowledge sharing in municipalities lies on the fact that municipalities need to constantly offer effective and efficient service to citizens (Dikotla 2016:4). This means that they have to adopt the idea of knowledge sharing as a mechanism of achieving a competitive advantage, by making use of human and intellectual resources within their organisations (Ncoyini & Cilliers 2016: 575). This task could be impossible to achieve without sharing necessary knowledge among individuals and different functions of municipality (Dikotla 2016:4).

For instance, German municipalities have different authorities offering various services. However, effective sharing of knowledge has offered an opportunity for authorities with lower maturity in improving service effectiveness (Ahrend, Pittke & Leopold 2014: 9). Furthermore, one of the unique interesting ideas in German municipalities is that local government experts transfer their knowledge to all regions of the world and cooperate with their international counterparts as colleagues

(Wilhelmy 2011:5). In addition, Canadian municipal experts and their local government counterparts around the world also use a “peer-to-peer” approach to capacity development (Liu 2015:9). In Malaysia, local authorities are striving to increase knowledge sharing amongst their employees by developing knowledge repositories, adopting and implementing technologies in their daily operations as part of their organisational strategy (Mohamed, Wee & Chen 2014:1330). This capacitates knowledge sharing as a means of improving municipal governance (Dikotla, Mahlatji & Makgahlela 2014:850). However, inaccessible knowledge has resulted in frustrations around implementation and execution of projects and other processes meant to improve service delivery (Local Government Turn Around Strategy (LGTAS 2009:3). In addition, due to lack of knowledge sharing, people in organisations tend to remain fixed in silos, poorly knitted together, prone to duplication of work and repetition of mistakes, wastage of resources, and forgetful of good ideas (Gaffoor & Cloete 2010:5).

In South Africa, municipalities are the core institutions within the sphere of local government (South African Local Government Association (SALGA 2011:5). There are three types of municipalities in South Africa (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108 of 1996:77). Firstly, Metropolitan municipalities are ranked as category ‘A’ type of municipality (Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998:7). It is single tier, meaning that, it has exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority in its area. To be classified as metropolitan, municipalities are required to have more than 500 000 voters and are established to administer South Africa’s most urbanised areas (South African Institute of Race Relations 2015:3). Secondly, areas that fall outside of the metropolitan municipal areas are divided into local municipalities (South African Institute of Race Relations 2015:3). Local municipalities are a category ‘B’ type of municipalities (Local Government Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998:7). This municipal category shares municipal executive and legislative authority in its area with a category ‘C’ (district) municipality within whose area it falls under (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1998 :78). Thirdly, district municipalities are category ‘C’, on the second level of administrative division, below the provinces and above the local municipalities (Local Government Municipal Systems Act 2000 part 4:85). There are usually between four and six local municipalities that come together in a district municipality (South African Institute of Race Relations 2015:3). Like any other form of

government, the South African government has assigned municipalities with the role of delivering basic services that are beneficial to the livelihood of local communities and societal welfare in general (Sebola 2015:5). All these types of municipalities have a core responsibility to provide basic services such as water, sanitation, markets, refuse removal, and land management (Nkomo 2017:2). Therefore, based on the narrative above; in South Africa, municipalities are referred to as the local government. The South African Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005, further emphasises the need to have a coherent system for knowledge sharing. It provides sound legislative reasoning for knowledge sharing to occur. Under section 4, the act includes the following:

*In conducting their affairs all organs of state in national government, provincial governments and local governments must seek to achieve the object of this Act by, inter alia – ...*

*(c) Co-ordinating their actions when implementing policy, legislation or decisions affecting the interests of other governments and avoiding unnecessary and wasteful duplication or jurisdictional contest;*

*(d) Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that they have sufficient institutional capacity and effective procedures –*

*i. To consult, to co-operate and to share information with other organs of state; and*

*ii. To respond promptly to requests by other organs of state for consultation, cooperation and information sharing.*

According to South African Local Government Association (SALGA) (2012/13:66), effective management and sharing of municipal knowledge can assist municipalities to:

- Improve accountability through effective management of municipal information and knowledge resources.
- Make informed decisions about municipal governance.
- Increase level of collaboration internally and externally.

- Enhance collaboration and strategic partnerships with stakeholders.
- Capture knowledge of retiring employees.
- Retention of the municipality's institutional memory.

The South African local government faces key challenges in relation to service delivery, and other governance issues within a context of persistent poverty, inequality and widespread service delivery protests (The Presidency Republic of South Africa 2015:3). Although significant progress has been made in service delivery since the establishment of local government, many challenges persist (SALGA 2015:60). These challenges are worsened by huge growth in population and households in some municipalities. Municipalities situated in rural areas face significant infrastructure and service backlogs within the contexts of already limited resources and economic potential (SALGA 2015:60). Furthermore, there are key challenges faced in transforming the structures and functions of local government at district and municipal level, and of developing policy, regulation and implementation of new institutional systems to promote integrated development planning (IDP), performance measurement and monitoring (The Presidency Republic of South Africa 2015:27).

In terms of the local government legislation, for municipalities to provide effective basic services to communities, they are required to develop an integrated development plan (IDP) (South African Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000:36). IDP is a principal strategic planning instrument which guides and informs all planning, budgeting, management and decision-making in a municipality (Department of Provincial & Local Government 2001:4). Therefore, IDPs ultimately enhance integrated service delivery, promote sustainable, integrated communities and provide a full basket of services (Sebei 2013: 20). According to (SALGA 2015:59), The Municipal Systems Act 2000 requires municipal IDPs to align with other municipalities, provincial and national government through a system of cooperative governance. It also became a legislative requirement for municipalities to undertake extensive public consultation in the formulation and implementation of local planning, mainly relating to overall performance (Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000: 38). If effectively implemented, these plans should play a central role in ensuring the delivery of better services (Department of Cooperative Governance Republic of South Africa 2014:43).

However, the quality of many of the plans remains a challenge. The IDPs still tend to be a product of systematic and process-driven planning approaches. Municipalities are facing challenges of implementing strategic plans in the form of integrated development planning (Netswera & Phago, 2011:132). Many municipalities have reported skills shortages, because some more skilled and experienced managers left municipal employment (Koma 2012:109). Furthermore, lack of competencies in municipal structures negatively affect the ability to account for public resources administered on behalf of communities (SALGA 2015:32). In this regard, the survival of these municipalities depends on how they manage and share knowledge (Dikotla 2016:31).

Since 2004, South Africa has experienced a movement of local protests amounting to a rebellion from the poor (Dikotla, Mahlatji & Makgahlela 2014:848). Service delivery protests are a sign of public dissatisfaction with quantity or quality of basic services they receive (South African Local Government Association 2015:8). In such protests, the historical backlog of services and governance issues emphasised (Department of Cooperative Governance, Republic of South Africa 2014:42). NDM has been no exception in these service delivery protests. During 2015 and 2016, NDM has experienced community protests, due to dissatisfaction of communities on the level of service delivery implementation in Emalahleni, Victor Khanye and Emakhazeni municipalities. Among other things protestors were complaining about lack of proper implementation of the approved IDP document by Council (Witbank News April 11, 2016). In addition, from the Auditor General's outcome, only NDM and Steve Tshwete municipalities have received clean audit opinions between 2010 and 2015 financial years (NDM IDP 2016-2017:103). Some of the audit findings by the Auditor General (AG) for municipalities, include among others, lack of proper knowledge, skills and capacity, non-compliance with the national treasury policies and regulations, inadequate planning; lack of proper accountability; fraud and corruption; irregularities in supply chain management processes and lack of proper records management systems (Ambe & Badenshorst-Wiss (2012: 255) & AG report (2015:98).

This dissertation reports on an investigation on knowledge sharing in Nkangala District Municipality (NDM) in Mpumalanga, South Africa. The purpose of the study is to

contribute a better understanding of the significance of knowledge sharing between individuals, departments and local municipalities of NDM. As one of the employees of NDM, the researcher has observed that NDM produces significant volume of knowledge. If shared effectively, this knowledge may improve service delivery.

## **1.2 Contextual Setting**

Nkangala District Municipality (NDM) is one of the municipal institutions of local government in Mpumalanga province, South Africa. It is composed of six local municipalities, namely, Steve Tshwete, Victor Khanye, Emakhazeni, Emalahleni, Thembisile Hani and Dr JS Moroka. NDM plays a major role in supporting the six local municipalities, financially as well as technically, for the local municipalities to effectively provide services to the community. This means that NDM do not directly provide services to the community. It also means that local municipalities are fully involved in the planning processes of the district, in order to receive support. Generally, NDM municipalities are characterised by rural settlement patterns, huge backlogs in basic household infrastructure and services.

There seems to be a huge amount of knowledge that is created during the IDP process in NDM, which should be shared amongst all the individuals involved. The IDP processes engage with stakeholders, politicians, management and staff on service delivery issues at a strategic and operational level. The IDP process further provides an opportunity for the municipality to debate and agree on a long-term vision for the development of the municipality. The IDP also promotes intergovernmental co-ordination, by facilitating a system of communication and co-ordination between local, provincial and national spheres of government. Among the core components of an IDP, the following matters must also be outlined: municipal Council's vision for long term development of the municipality; an assessment of the existing level of development in the municipality, which must include, an identification of communities, which do not have access to basic municipal services; Council's development strategies, which must be aligned with any national or provincial sectoral plans and planning requirements binding on the municipality in terms of legislation; Council's operational strategies; a financial plan, which must include a budget projection for at least the next three years; and the key performance indicators and performance

targets determined in terms of the Performance Management System. All of these components of IDP process could encourage knowledge sharing practices in NDM.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Knowledge sharing in municipalities leads to dissemination of best practices among staff members and continuity, even when other staff members retire or are retrenched Dikotla, Mahlatji & Makgahlela (2014:856). Through the implementation of KM practices, such as knowledge sharing, local governments could be in a position to deliver the best possible services, function effectively and operate an environment characterised by transparency and accountability (Gaffoor & Cloete 2010:2). As such, implementation of knowledge sharing in municipalities guarantees further benefits, such as motivated staff, enhanced decision making, more democratic governance and improved service delivery (SALGA 2015:17). NDM relies heavily on the use of information and knowledge gained through experience from staff members, consultants and stakeholders, in order for it to provide effective services. Provision of effective services in NDM requires collaborated planning with its six local municipalities to develop an IDP, which is a five-year service delivery strategic plan. The researcher has noticed that, lack of knowledge sharing has resulted in an intermittent level of performance in staff members who fill in positions of employees who have retired or resigned. Furthermore, there is misalignment on IDP implementation plans in local and the district municipalities, which result in some priority service delivery obligations not fulfilled. In addition, one local municipality (Steve Tshwete) perform extremely well in delivering services than others, which shows an indistinct picture of knowledge sharing in NDM. Therefore, this research investigated the level of knowledge sharing undertakings in NDM.

### **1.4 Research Aim**

The aim of the research was to investigate knowledge sharing in NDM. The possible significance of the study is to articulate the benefits of knowledge sharing practices, mainly for managerial considerations. This study may also set a foundation for identifying mechanisms that can enhance knowledge sharing within NDM, through the existing knowledge sharing structures.



## **1.5 Research objectives**

The research objectives of the study are:

- To investigate the level of understanding on knowledge sharing in NDM.
- To determine knowledge sharing practices in NDM
- To establish challenges of knowledge sharing practices in NDM.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

The questions that the study intends to address are:

- What is the level understanding of knowledge sharing in NDM?
- What are the knowledge sharing practices in NDM?
- What are the challenges regarding to knowledge sharing practices in NDM?

## **1.7 Originality of the study**

This research may be a solution to possible knowledge sharing gaps and unavailability of related practices in NDM. The study is also likely to raise awareness of the importance of sustainable knowledge sharing practices especially for NDM.

## **1.8 Research Approach**

A qualitative research approach was used for the study. A qualitative research approach allows the researcher to examine people's experiences in detail, by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, visual methods, life histories or biographies (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey 2011:9). A qualitative research can be used to provide in-depth understanding of research issues; embracing perspectives of study population and contexts in which they live (Hennink *et al.* 2011: 10).

The purpose of a qualitative research is to gain a detailed understanding of certain phenomenon, to identify socially constructed meanings of the phenomenon and the context in which a phenomenon occurs (Hennink *et al.* 2011:84). In addition, qualitative research involves the studied use, and collection of a variety of practical

materials such as case studies. (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:3). In the case of this study, the researcher wanted to gain a detailed understanding of the knowledge sharing practices in Nkangala District Municipality.

### **1.8.1 Research design**

A case study research design was used. Case study research begins with the identification of a specific case, such as an individual, a small group, an organisation, or a relationship (Creswell 2013:98). NDM was selected as a case study for this research. The selected research design for this study is an effective exercise to obtain background information about the intended research question (Remeny 2012:20). A hallmark of a good qualitative case study is that, it presents an in-depth understanding of the case (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston 2013:67). In order to accomplish this, the researcher collected qualitative data, through interviews (Creswell 2013:98).

### **1.8.2 Study population**

A study population is often needed to determine who to recruit, and how. A study population is often defined during the conceptual design of the study, and is typically informed by published literature, previous research and the nature of the research question (Hennink *et al.* 2011:85). In this case, the study population is composed of the 178 managers of NDM, including the six local municipalities. These managers consist of senior managers, deputy managers and assistant managers.

### **1.8.3 Sample Procedures**

By studying a sample, expectations are that valid conclusions will be drawn about the larger group (Ngulube 2005:132). A sample is a part of a larger body selected to represent the whole. The population will be regarded as representative of a given population. A very important issue in sampling is to determine the most adequate size of the sample (Creswell 2013:155).

The study used purposive stratified sampling method. Ritchie *et al* (2013:113) describe purposive sampling as the selection of participants based on a certain criterion. The main objective of a purposive sample is to produce a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative of the population (Battaglia 2011:2). In qualitative research, stratified sampling is a specific strategy for implementing the broader goal

of purposive sampling (Morgan 2012:1). For this reason, the researcher has opted to utilise purposive sampling to conduct this study. The sample units have been selected because they have particular characteristics, which enables detailed exploration and understanding of the central theme, and questions which the researcher desires to study (Bryman 2012:91). The study sought to gather information from NDM managers, including local municipalities. The managers were selected because they play a major role in the development of service delivery plans and the general operation of the municipalities. The researcher ensured that enough diversity was included so that all the departments and units of interest were represented.

#### **1.8.4 Sample size**

According to Kumar (2011:194), a sample size is a number of units from which a researcher intends to obtain information. Participants are selected based on the purpose of their involvement in the study (Guest, Namey & Mitchell 2014:9). NDM managers and some from its local municipalities were selected. Stratified sampling procedure is a process that divides the overall population into separate subgroups, and then creates a sample by drawing sub samples from each of those groups (Morgan 2012:2). To implement this process, a total number of 178 managers were divided into sub groups, in relations to the research objectives and to further ensure that data included cases from each of these subgroups. The subgroups included managers from the NDM and the six local municipalities, and subsamples were also drawn from the subgroups. According to Guest, Namey & Mitchell (2017:13), stratified sampling is conducted in a much more specific manner, such as the amount of experience in an environment or degree of exposure to an intervention. Therefore, to select the specific sample, expert sampling strategy was used. The logic and power of expert sampling lie in selecting people to study or interview who can inform an inquiry through their knowledge, experience and expertise (Patton 2018:648). Nishishiba, Jones & Kraner (2017:15) suggests that some research questions may be well answered by soliciting expert opinions. In this case, the study was interested in managers who were experts in the fields of records management, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Human Resource Management (HRM) and Integrated Development Planning (IDP). These managers' roles in the municipalities are related to knowledge sharing.

The reasons for selecting these departments is that, records management is the custodian of information and knowledge in an organisation (Dikotla 2016:219). Therefore, the role of records managers, concerns the accessibility of information in public bodies and the overall safe keeping of public sector information sources (Schellnack-Kelly 2014:10), which is applicable to knowledge sharing. ICT is viewed as an enabler in knowledge sharing (Averweg 2008:10). It allows easy access and retrieval of information and knowledge in various parts of an organisation (Gaffoor & Cloete 2010:8). Hence, the study considered ICT as an enabler for knowledge sharing in NDM. The IDP unit exist in municipalities to ensure coordination and alignment of planning activities (Musitha 2012:104). The value of knowledge that is produced and shared, during the planning processes is crucial for NDM's effectiveness. The core business of HRM is to develop employees, select and hire people, train and develop staff, reward them and create a culture of learning (Edvardsson 2008:1). Therefore, activities conducted within the frame of HRM have a significant influence on the effectiveness of KM practices (Figurska 2009:2), such as knowledge sharing.

A sample size of 18 managers, out of the 178 managers was selected. The sample size for each subgroup (municipality) was based on the number of managers each municipality has in the areas of study. It is worth noting that some municipalities comprised of a smaller number of managers. As a result, one manager was considered for two or more areas of speciality. In larger municipalities, one manager was considered for one area of speciality, which resulted in a larger number of managers selected. In addition, Daniel (2012:338) states that in most cases, specific sizes are not a target in purposive sampling. The sample size is determined by the researcher, considering how well the chosen sample, generates data, enough to learn what he or she wants to learn (Suter 2014:242). In this case, the sample size of 18 managers was deemed enough to answer the research questions for this study.

The table below indicates the number of managers from NDM and each local municipality:

**Table 1: Sample Size**

<b>Name of municipality</b>	<b>Number of departments/ Units</b>	<b>Number of managers</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
Nkangala District	12	26	3
Steve Tshwete	15	30	3
Emakhazeni	9	21	2
Emalahleni	17	33	4
Thembisile Hani	9	21	2
Dr JS Moroka	11	25	2
Victor Khanye	9	22	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>18</b>

In NDM, three managers that were selected from corporate services department (manager is responsible for human resource management and records management), ICT and the IDP Unit. Three managers from corporate services department (manager is responsible for human resource management and records management), ICT and the IDP Unit were selected from Steve Tshwete Local Municipality. In Emakhazeni Local Municipality, two managers were selected from corporate services department, (the manager is responsible for ICT, Human resource management and records management) and IDP Unit. In Emalahleni Local Municipality, four managers were selected from human resource management, records management, ICT and IDP. In Thembisile Hani Local Municipality, two managers were selected from corporate services department (manager is responsible for records management, human resource management and ICT) and IDP Unit. In Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality, two managers were selected from corporate services department (manager is responsible for ICT, Human resource management and records management) and IDP Unit. In Victor Khanye Local Municipality, two managers were selected from corporate services department (manager is responsible for ICT, Human resource management and records management) and IDP Unit.

### **1.8.5 Data collection methods**

In-depth interviewing was used to collect data for this study. In-depth interviewing is a particularly useful method for examining social world from the research participants'

point of view (Silverman 2011:137). Rubin & Rubin (2012:3) states that, through in-depth interviews, the researcher is able to obtain detailed information relating to experiences, motives and opinions of others. In that case, the researcher could learn to see situations differently from the perspectives of others. Open-ended questions were used, which meant that the interviewees could respond in ways they better understood the topic. Rubin & Rubin (2012: 29) suggest that, responses could be expressed by elaborating on answers, disagreeing with the question, or raising new issues.

An interview guide was developed to guide the interview. An interview guide is a list of questions used by the interviewer, mainly as a memory aide during the interview (Hennink *et al.* 2011: 112). The interview guide in this case was developed in line with a structure recommended by Hennink *et al.* (2011: 112):

Introduction: the introduction consisted of interviewer reminders on what to tell the participant at the beginning of the interview. This part also includes, explaining the purpose of the research and general background questions for the interviewee.

Opening questions: these questions were aimed at building a relationship with the participants for them to feel comfortable enough to tell their stories, even when the interview develops to the stage of asking the key questions.

Key questions: according to Guest, Namey & Mitchel (2014: 35), these questions were typically arranged for the interview to mine core issues in a logical sequence that the participant could follow.

Concluding questions: these questions are general questions meant to conclude the interview.

#### **1.8.6 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a given study (Pilot & Beck, 2014:141). Specific procedures employed, such as the line of questioning pursued in data gathering sessions and methods of data analysis, were derived, where possible, from those that have been successfully utilised in previous comparable projects (Shenton 2004:64). The integrity of findings lies in the data, considering the researcher's ability

to adequately put the data together, analytic processes, and findings in such a way that the reader is able to confirm the adequacy of the findings (Morrow 2005:252) as well as consistent findings, which can be duplicated (Connelly 2016:435). Therefore, in order to enhance trustworthiness on this study, the researcher recorded every step undertaken during data collection. The data collection process was further reported in accordance with the criteria that was used. In addition, the study recommended a comparison of the study to similar studies in a bid to confirm quality.

### **1.8.7 Data presentation and analysis**

Qualitative data analysis is sometimes described as a process of developing evidence-based interpretations of data, by applying appropriate techniques to ensure that study findings are well rooted in data (Hennink *et al.* 2011:205). Data analysis involves arranging data into controllable themes, patterns, trends and relationships. The aim of analysis is to understand various elements of data, through an assessment of the relationships between concepts, constructs or variables. In addition, the researcher utilised data analysis to see whether any patterns or trends can be identified (Babbie & Mouton 2004:109). Over the course of data analysis process, raw data was organised in a logical way. The interview results were tallied, so that it was clear how many people responded, and how people only responded to specific questions on knowledge sharing practices in NDM.

There are many variants of qualitative research, which involve many forms of data analysis, including interview transcripts, field notes, conversational analysis, and visual data, whether photographs, film, or observations of internet occurrences (O'Dwyer & Bernauer 2014: 192). This study employed a qualitative method of data collection. Qualitative data analysis was presented through analytic explanations and descriptions.

The researcher transcribed the data using the optical character recognition (OCR) software, for the field notes and speech recognition software was used for the voice recordings. This software was used to produce word-processing files from the field notes as well as the voice recordings (Gibbs 2007:17).

The researcher analysed data using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), which is qualitative data analysis software. The software was used to manage the coding, the retrieval of texts and it also helped to examine features

and relationships in the texts (Gibbs 2007:106). The researcher then made an interpretation from the summaries that were produced through the data analysis software.

## **1.9 Ethical Considerations**

At the core of expectations and obligations that are part of a research relationships, is ensuring that the interviewees do not face any harm as a result of the research (Rubin & Rubin 2012: 85). The following ethical issues were taken into consideration for this study: Informed consent, respect, privacy and confidentiality.

*Informed consent:* Proper respect for human freedom generally includes, participants' approval (Chaundhry 2005:129) and voluntary participation. In other words, no physical or psychological pressure should be subjected on them to participate (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:65). In addition, Hennink *et al.* (2011:68) states that, a researcher should seek permission from a manager, or director to recruit participants for a study. This means that people should be given adequate information to enable them to decide on whether to participate in a study or not (Ritchie *et al.* 2013:87).

In this case, using Ritchie *et al.* (2013: 88) strategies, the researcher gave the participants full details on the purpose and aims of the study. They were informed that the study requires voluntary participation, and they could withdraw at any time. The participation involved interviews. Letters to set appointments were prepared and sent to all the managers. Informed consent was painstakingly obtained from each participant.

*Respect:* it is important to be straight forward and truthful with the participants. Deceit implies lack of respect for participants (Rubin & Rubin 2012:85). Ritchie *et al.* (2013:137) suggests that the topic of the research must not be misrepresented, in order to allay suspicion and gain access, because any deceptions, even the slightest are likely to cause problems. In addition, Henning (2008:75) stresses that participants must be fully informed about the research in which the interviews are going to be used. They need to know whether their privacy and sensitivity are protected, and what is going to happen with their information after recording. The researcher ensured that participants were aware that the information gathered will be kept safe by the researcher after recording.



This means that participants should not be exploited, by publishing material that would cause them harm, such as getting arrested, lose a job, promotion, or part of their income. It also means not revealing information they would consider embarrassing (Rubin & Rubin 2012: 89).

*Privacy and confidentiality.* Confidentiality is the primary assurance that safeguards against unwanted exposure (Denzil & Lincoln 2011:66). This means that information from the participants should not be disclosed. The researcher ensured that the interview reports were kept confidential to protect participant's identity.

### **1.10 Definition of key concepts**

#### District Municipality

'A district municipality is a municipality that has municipal executive and legislative authority in an area that includes more than one municipality and which is described in Section 155(1) of the Constitution as a category C municipality.' A district municipality has the powers and functions of developing an Integrated Development Planning (IDP) for the district municipality as a whole, including a framework for IDP of all municipalities under the district municipality (municipal structures Act 117 of 1997: 7).

#### Local Municipality

'A local municipality is a municipality that shares municipal executive and legislative authority in its area with a district municipality within whose area it falls, and which is described in Section 155(1) of the constitution as a category B municipality' (municipal structures Act 117 of 1998: 7).

#### Local Government

Local government could be described as a public organisation authorised to manage and govern the affairs of a given territory or area of jurisdiction. It is also important to note that, local government refers to a sphere of government, and not an individual municipality (Koma 2010: 113).

## Public Sector

For this research, public sector refers to government enterprises that are owned by government, such as National, Provincial and Local government. The enterprises consist of a governing body with a defined territorial authority (van de Waladt 2004: 18). They are accountable to and report directly to the central authority, the legislature council, cabinet or executive head (van de Waladt 2004: 18).

## Knowledge

Knowledge is the full utilisation of information coupled with harnessing people's skills and ideas, as well as their commitments and motivations (Davenport & Prusak 1998:1). Islam, Hasan, Ahmed & Ahmed (2011: 5901) define knowledge as a mix of experiences, values, background information, and expert insight that provide a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information.

## Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing is defined as activities of transferring or disseminating knowledge from a person, group or organisation to another (Kaewchur, Phusavat 2013: 181). Sandhu, Jain & Ahmed (2011: 2012) defines knowledge sharing as a transfer of valuable facts, beliefs, perspectives, concepts learned through study, observation or personal experience from knower to knowledge recipients.

## Organisational culture

Organisational culture is the perception of the character of an organisation by its employees. Individual perceptions create Organisational culture (Mannie *et al.* 2013:3). Shared basic assumptions that an organisation learnt, while coping with environment and solving external adaption and internal integration problems that are taught to individuals as a correct way of solving problems forms an Organisational culture (Islam *et al.* 2011:5901).

### **1.11 Chapter outline**

Chapter 1: introduces the study and sets the scene. This chapter provides the background from which the study is based and the historical context of NDM in relation to knowledge sharing.

Chapter 2: discusses literature review on the topic. Some knowledge sharing components are defined from literature, as well as characteristics and nature of knowledge sharing in the public sector, its challenges and knowledge sharing strategies.

Chapter 3: discusses the research design, study area, target population, sampling procedure and method, data collection procedures and instruments, as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: focuses on presentation of the research findings from the study, in relations with research objectives and questions. The findings are compared with views of existing literature and the available research done by other scholars on knowledge sharing in municipalities.

Chapter 5: provides a summary of the key findings, conclusions and recommendations and suggestions for further research.

### **1.12 Summary of Chapter one**

Chapter one provided an overview of the dissertation and setting the scene of the study as well as the context within which the study was determined. The chapter outlined the background of NDM, which influenced the study and the significance and justifications of carrying the study. The research problem was discussed as well as the objectives and questions guiding the research. Key terms were defined to provide a more understanding of the subject in question. Research method employed was also presented. Ethical considerations were also discussed to show where the study may be challenged in its findings. The chapter also provided a chapter outline describing the content of each chapter.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature on knowledge sharing in the public sector, since municipalities fall under public sector organisations. The literature discussed includes the following issues: knowledge concept, knowledge management concept, practices and model, knowledge-sharing concept and knowledge sharing in the public sector, factors influencing knowledge sharing and challenges of knowledge sharing in the public sector and how these challenges could be overcome.

### **2.2 The Knowledge Concept**

According to Davenport & Prusak (1998:4) knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. In organisations knowledge is applied to the human actions of responding to specific needs, problems or opportunities (Phaladi 2011:26). It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. Knowledge is a resource that multiplies when it is shared effectively (Davenport & Prusak 2000). Knowledge not only exists in documents and repositories, but it becomes embedded in people's minds overtime and it is demonstrated through their actions and behaviours (Al-Alawi, al-Marzooqi & Mohammed 2007:22). In organisations, knowledge is often embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organisational routines, processes, practices, and norms (Davenport & Prusak 1998:4). Knowledge as the fundamental resource, assumes special importance in every process of government business (Cong, Le-Hua & Stonehouse 2007:253).

#### **2.2.1 Types of knowledge**

Nonaka & Konno 1998:41 noted two types of knowledge, which are tacit and explicit knowledge. According to Nonaka (1994:16) explicit knowledge is Knowledge that can be expressed in words and numbers. This kind of knowledge may be shared in a form of data, scientific formulae, specifications, and so forth, formally and systematically between individuals (Nonaka & Konno 1998:42). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995:) noted that the explicit form of knowledge is always found in public service systems, in computers, databases, rules, regulations, memos, and procedure manuals. On the

other hand, "tacit" knowledge has a personal quality, which makes it hard to formalise and share with others (Nonaka & Konno 1998:42). Tacit knowledge is deeply rooted in action, commitment, and involvement in a specific context (Nonaka 1994:16). Tacit knowledge further, consist of mental models, beliefs and perspectives, so ingrained that we take them for granted, and therefore cannot easily articulate them (Nonaka 2008:9). For knowledge to impact organisational performance, it has to be available to support the organisation's processes (Badimo & Buckley 2014:3463).

Local government organisations' most valuable intellectual resources are entrenched in the minds of their employees (Ncoyini & Cilliers 2014:7). The type of knowledge that is commonly shared within municipalities is ranked as educational, work and personal (Dikotla, Mahlatji & Makgahlela 2014:850). Most important of all, effective functioning of government rests on effective sharing and use of knowledge by public sector employees at various levels (Cong, Le-Hua & Stonehouse 2007:254).

### **2.3 Knowledge Management (KM)**

For the reason that knowledge sharing is one of the KM's processes, the researcher deemed it necessary to briefly discuss KM and KM processes.

White (2004:3) points out that KM is a process of creating, storing, sharing and re-using know-how to enable an organisation to achieve its goals and objectives. This allows organisations to be better suited to deliver customer services due to a greater understanding of the organisation's internal processes and functioning (Gaffoor 2010:2). Further, KM is about improved communication, learning and knowledge sharing (Molete, Dehinbo & Denhibo 2015:1). In local government organisations, KM offers a vast array of benefits, including enhanced service delivery, productivity, decision making and efficiency (Gaffoor & Cloete 2010:6). As such, KM allows organisations such as the local government to secure knowledge and convert knowledge into new action records to inform change of practices (Ramsey & Barkhuizen, 2011:5). Organisations are encouraged to use their strategic planning concepts to mobilise the required knowledge (capital and financial), in order to achieve organisational objectives (Edoun 2016:109). The adoption of KM ensures that municipalities can systematically capture and organise the wealth of knowledge and experience of staff, clients, stakeholders, beneficiaries and partners, thereby

leveraging and making readily accessible the knowledge and expertise that already exists within the municipality (SALGA 2015:17).

### **2.3.1 Knowledge management processes**

Various authors have highlighted on different KM processes. According to Cong (2007:253) the KM process consists of five key areas within a culture knowledge, which include knowledge creation, identification and capture, storage, sharing, application and use, and knowledge creation (Lee & Choi 2003:181). KM processes include knowledge creation, sharing, storage and usage. Mavodza & Ngulube (2011:19) states that KM processes include knowledge generation, acquisition, storage, transfer, sharing and knowledge retention. The KM processes are briefly discussed in this section are of interest to the study. They include knowledge creation, acquisition, transfer and retention.

*Knowledge creation:* it is concerned about organisations playing a critical role in mobilising tacit knowledge held by individuals and provide the forum for a "spiral of knowledge" creation through socialisation, combination, externalisation, and internalisation (SCEI) model (Nonaka 1994:34). In a local government environment, the SCEI Model can be promoted by diversified knowledge workers within the organisation (during meetings, workshops, trainings) and outside the organisation (during community meetings and dialogues) with the aim of combining it to create explicit knowledge (Ngcamu 2012:134).

*Knowledge acquisition:* it is a part of KM, defined as "the process of critically identifying, exploit existing and acquired knowledge asset and develop new opportunities" (Davenport 2005:684). The key to success is to ensure that the firm can attract and maintain knowledge workers through appropriate human resource management practices (Ngcamu 2012:134). According to Cong (2007:253) identification and capture refer to identifying the critical knowledge, types of knowledge and the right people with the necessary expertise that should be captured. Thus, skills and knowledge acquisition should be top of the municipalities' agenda in an attempt to achieve municipal strategic vision and objectives (Koma 2010:116).

*Knowledge storage:* once new knowledge is acquired; KM mechanisms should be in place to prepare it to be entered into the organisation's memory in a manner that maximises its impact and long-term reusability (King 2009:8). This captured knowledge is stored in a knowledge repository to be shared between individuals, departments, divisions and the like (Cong 2007:253). The goal is to take documents with knowledge embedded in them, which may include memos, reports, presentations, articles and store them in a repository where they can be easily retrieved (Ramohlale 2014: 45). Therefore, knowledge storages are necessary in municipalities to keep measures which solve newly arising community problems, while related methods and procedures can be referred to by effectively utilising success and failure cases of existing local innovation (Choi & Cho 2015:34).

*Knowledge transfer:* is referred to as a cycle, where knowledge is communicated within the organisation and to the community, through a variety of methods (Mohamed, Seow & Goh 2014:1). In addition, it is process through which one unit is affected by the experience of another (Argote, Igram & Moreland 2000: 2). Therefore, documenting and sharing of best practices affords municipalities the opportunity to acquire knowledge on lessons learned and a constant learning process on how to improve and adapt strategies through feedback, reflection and analysis (SALGA 2013:3). This creates a context of social interaction, which defines how knowledge will be applied in specific situations, and establishes the processes resulting in the development and distribution of new knowledge within an organisation (Phaladi 2011:43).

*Knowledge retention:* Once knowledge has been created, there is need to retain it through preservation and maintaining the viability of knowledge within the system (Chigada & Ngulube 2016: 222). It involves moving knowledge into a state where it is kept available for future use (Egeland 2017:1). Knowledge retention contributes towards corporate governance and in safeguarding the business interests of public sector organisations (Dewah & Mutula 2014: 364).

Knowledge management therefore, focuses on creating new knowledge, sharing, enhancing and utilising existing knowledge to achieve organisational goals (Dewah &

Mutula 2016: 363). Through KM, departments can systematically capture and organise the wealth of knowledge and staff experience, clients, stakeholders, beneficiaries and partners, thereby leveraging and making the knowledge and expertise that already exists within the department readily accessible, as well as creating new useful knowledge (Molete, Denhibo & Denhibo 2015:3). Knowledge management systems that support collaboration include intranet infrastructures, which offer basic functionality for communication, exchange, storage, searching, as well as retrieval of data and documents. Groupware systems enhance collaboration by supporting discussions, time management, meetings, and creative workshops (Kaewchur & Phusavat 2016: 237). In brief, knowledge management is generally referred to as the way municipalities create, retain and share knowledge (Dikotla 2016: 16).

## **2.4 Knowledge Sharing**

Knowledge sharing is one of the KM processes, which is also central to the success of all knowledge management strategies. Effective knowledge sharing practices enable reuse and regeneration of knowledge at an individual and organisational level (Ramohlale 2014:129). This is the process whereby tacit or explicit knowledge is exchanged between individuals or groups through socialisation (Mphahlele 2010:31). Knowledge sharing is also defined as a social interaction culture, involving the exchange of employee knowledge, experiences, and skills through the whole organisation and the means by which an organisation obtains access to its own and other organisations' knowledge (Karemente, Aduwo, Mugejjera & Lubega 2009:55). For study, knowledge sharing is conceptualised using Van den Hooff & De Ridder's definition, which entails that sharing involves an exchange of knowledge between individuals through knowledge donating and knowledge collecting (Van den Hooff & De Ridder's 2004:118).

Knowledge sharing is a process, which involves the contribution of knowledge by an organisation, application, and assimilation of knowledge by employees (Van der Meer, 2014:254). Ryan & O'Connor (2009:1617) assert that, the success of knowledge sharing largely depends on the type of knowledge and the purpose for which knowledge is shared. Social interaction is posited as the primary means by which tacit knowledge is shared. For municipalities, knowledge sharing is capturing, organising, reusing, and transferring experience-based knowledge that resides within the

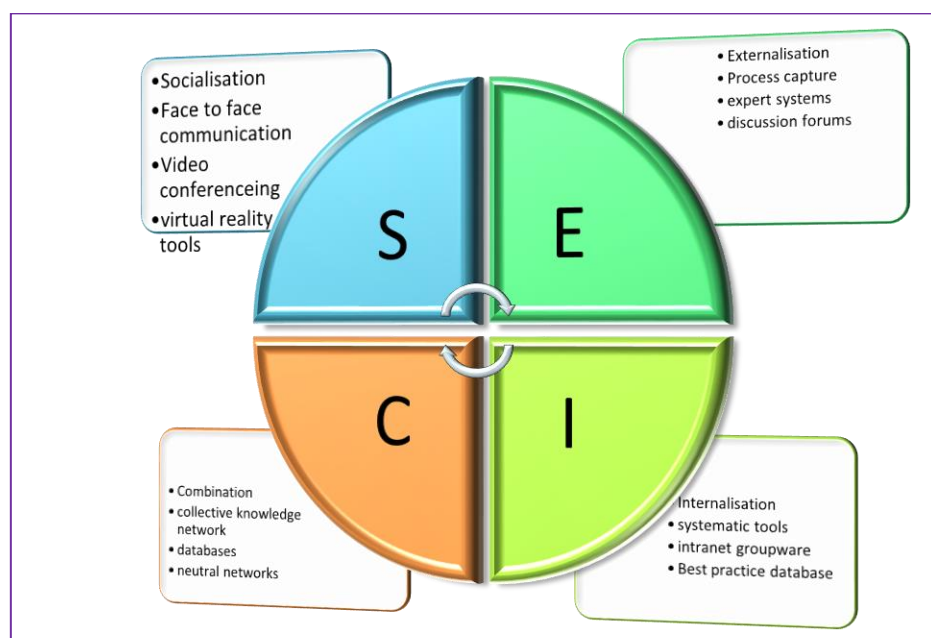


municipality and making that knowledge available to others in the organisation (Dikotla, Mahlatji & Makgahlela 2014:855). Knowledge management experts, such as Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) and Polanyi (1966) present that tacit knowledge is transferred mainly, through observation and face- to- face interactions. Furthermore, sharing tacit knowledge is also achievable using information and communication technology platforms, such videos, intranet, weblogs and many others. (Kaewchur & Prusak 2016:237). If knowledge is effectively and efficiently shared among employees and across government spheres, possibilities are that corporate governance would improve and this would result in improvement of service delivery (Dikotla 2016:39).

### 2.4.1 Knowledge Sharing Model

One of the well-known approaches to deal with knowledge sharing is the SECI model proposed by Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995). This model involves socialisation, externalisation, combination and internalisation (Motele, Denhibo & Denhibo 2015:3). The SECI model is described as a dynamic process in which explicit and tacit knowledge are exchanged and transformed (Nonaka & Konno 1998:45). This model is illustrated and briefly discussed below.

**Figure 1: The SECI Model**



Source: Nonaka & Konno 1998:45

*Socialisation:* is a mode of knowledge conversion that enables us to convert tacit knowledge through interaction between individuals. Various forms of tacit knowledge

brought into the field by individual members are converted through co-experience, to form a common base of understanding Nonaka (1994: 24).

*Combination:* involves the use of social processes to combine different bodies of explicit knowledge from individuals. Individuals exchange and combine knowledge through exchange mechanisms such as meetings and telephone conversations (Nonaka 1994: 19). It further involves the dissemination of explicit knowledge through presentations or meetings.

*Externalisation:* relate to patterns of conversion involving both tacit and explicit knowledge (Nonaka 1994:18). It requires the expression of tacit knowledge and its translation into comprehensible forms that can be understood by others (Nonaka & Konno 1998:43).

*Internalisation:* involves the conversion of explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge, which bears some similar traits to the traditional notion of "learning"(Nonaka 1994:18). For example, training programs help the trainee understand the organisation and themselves in the whole (Nonaka & Konno 1998:45).

Although Nonaka's SECI model is to a certain extent related to knowledge creation; all four of his tacit-explicit transformation processes could equally apply to knowledge sharing (Taylor 2004:23). Through access to the use of documentation, databases, resource centres, policy papers, guidelines, staff training, and supervision, knowledge sharing becomes viable. Experience and discussions of knowledge sharing can also enhance an organisation's members' collective memory in a manner in which they realise each individual's tacit knowledge and put it in the public domain (Cong, Le-Hua & Stonehouse 2007: 255). The success of knowledge sharing is to a large extent determined by the factors influencing knowledge sharing, and therefore, such factors must be known first, analysed and understood (Khoza & Pretorius 2017: 3). This study shares the same view by Ngcamu (2012:134), where SECI model can be promoted by diversified knowledge workers within the organisation (during meetings and workshops, trainings) and outside the organisation (during community meetings and dialogues) with the aim of creating explicit knowledge, mainly in a local government environment, such as NDM. Ultimately, the study will come up with useful recommendations on how the SECI model could be promoted, based on the current knowledge sharing patterns in NDM.

## **2.5 Factors influencing knowledge sharing**

Alawi, al-Marzooqi & Mohammed (2007:37), Gaffor & Cloete (2010:6), Amayah (2013:457), Nkomonyane (2010:53) and Seba & Rowley (2012:121) found that trust, communication, strategy and leadership, information systems, reward systems, organisational culture and structure are important factors for the success of knowledge sharing. Mannie, Van Niekerk & Adendorf (2013: 7), Thomas & Underwood (2015:26) confirmed organisational culture and a learning organisation as the two significant factors for leaders to use in their pursuit of enabling the knowledge sharing agenda in public sector organisations.

### **2.5.1 Organisational Culture**

Culture can act as both an enabler and an impediment to the generation, distribution and sharing of knowledge and information (Ondari-Okemwa & Smith 2009:35). Nkomanyane (2010:17) states that knowledge sharing culture can motivate people to share ideas and insights voluntarily. If the culture is collaborative, then knowledge sharing amongst employees should be occurring (Mannie, Van Niekerk & Adendorf 2013:3). Sometimes a monetary incentive and other incentives may be used to change the public sector employee's attitude. However, without a knowledge-sharing culture, the prospects of creating the willingness to share information and knowledge remain weak (Kimani 2013:53).

### **2.5.2 Trust**

For tacit knowledge to be transferred successfully, there must be trust and mutual understanding (Amayah 2013:458). Trust leads to increased knowledge sharing, making knowledge sharing less costly, and increase the likelihood of knowledge acquired from a fellow employee to be effectively understood (Seba & Rowely 2012:122). Sharing extra information between individuals promotes the sharing of individual tacit knowledge (Nonaka 1994:28). Trust develops over time and, as such, should allow opportunities where knowledge transfer between members can increase (Schutte & Barkhuizen 2013:132) Trust can be maintained by making sure that collaboration is based on clear rules which are understood, accepted and followed by everyone involved (Dube & Ngulube 2012:75). Undoubtedly, the presence of trust

creates a conducive environment for knowledge sharing in an organisation (Kimani 2013: 54).

### 2.5.3 Rewards

Generally, employees in any organisation tend to perceive rewards as a measure of appreciating behaviours preferred and appreciated by top management (Alawi, Marzooqi & Mohammed 2007:36). Gafoor & Cloete (2010: 6) suggest that employee rewards and incentives for contributions towards knowledge sharing and management and are important in creating an environment and culture, which facilitate knowledge sharing. In order for rewards to successfully motivate staff to share their knowledge, these rewards must be properly designed to fit employees' needs and perceptions (Al-Alawi, Marzooqi & Mohammed 2007:27). This can be achieved through recognition, visibility, and the inclusion of knowledge-performance in appraisal systems and incentives within an organisation (Kimani 2013:55).

### 2.5.4 Leadership

According to (Janus 2016:3) becoming a knowledge-sharing organisation requires leadership that encourages the required changes in culture, provides supportive governance structures and financing, as well as external partnerships. This allows an organisation to develop the disciplined practice of knowledge capturing, learning, and sharing. Middle-up-down management model is suitable for promoting the efficient creation of knowledge sharing in business organisations (Nonaka 1994:26). The middle-up-down management model asserts that middle managers are the knowledge creators, which make them the centre of vertical and horizontal information flows (de Abreu 2015:12). Middle managers have a responsibility to facilitate knowledge sharing, by communicating ideas from top management to front line workers and vice-versa (Hislop 2013:114).

Another way in which top management provides employees with a sense of direction, is by setting the standards for justifying the value of knowledge that is constantly being developed by the organisation's members (Nonaka 1994:30). Awareness of knowledge culture and how to cultivate it, needs to be transferred from top managers to middle and supervisory managers, in order for knowledge sharing to permeate in an organisation (Rowley 2012:120). Harker (2015:115) advised that organisations

must construct an environment of participation by redesigning traditional work procedures and gradually entrenching knowledge sharing behaviour in the organisation

#### **2.5.5 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

Information communication technologies connect the routes for knowledge sharing in organisations. (Dikotla 2016: 257). Information Technology (IT) plays an important role in enabling effective acquisition, sharing and presentation of knowledge (Ardivicill 2012:5). Furthermore, ICTs help retrieve variety of information and knowledge embodied in systems, institutional repositories, books, theses and dissertations, processes, strategies, methodologies, emails, patents, products and services, within and outside organisations (Dewah & Mutula 2016:367). Harker (2015:141) suggests that IT systems should be easy to use, secondly, it should provide an abundance of tools, including tools for interaction, and thirdly, it should help its users to locate the knowledge which they require for professional application and should encourage further face-to-face interaction between its users.

### **2.6 Public Sector Organisations**

Municipalities are often described as comprising the sphere of public local government organisations, which is tasked mainly with the development and provision of services to communities (Bekink 2006:4). Local government could be described as public organisations authorised to manage and govern the affairs of a given territory or area of jurisdiction (Koma 2010:113). According to Arora (2011: 166), the term public sector refers to the functioning agencies & units of a federal, state, country, municipal & local levels of government. Through public service, every government strives to deliver basic services as effectively as possible (Ondari-Okemwa & Smith 2011:29). Based on the definition above, the study refers to municipalities as part of the public sector organisation.

Delivery of basic services may relate to the improvement of economic infrastructure, efficiency and effectiveness, as well as establishing a business-friendly environment by reducing the cost of setting up and doing business (Ondari-Okemwa & Smith 2011:33). This implies that public sector needs to provide public goods and services

in a manner that responds adequately to the needs of its stakeholders, within the constraints of its budget (Fourie & Poggenpoel 2017:171).

However, many highly committed and skilled staff members in the public sector are currently struggling to meet the high standards demanded for good corporate governance and service delivery, because of staff turnaround issues (Schutte & Barkhuizen 2015:136). Dewah & Mutula (2016:360) observed that, public sector organisations bear the challenge of staff discontinuity when transfers, deaths, dismissals, and right sizing occur. Individuals' knowledge does not help the public sector, because it could be lost if such personnel leave the organisation through death, retirement or resignation (Mkhize 2015: 3).

## **2.7 Knowledge sharing in the Public Sector**

Public sector organisations generate critical organisational knowledge and offer knowledge-driven work processes and practices to enhance productivity (Dewah & Mutula 2016:362). An increasing number of public sector organisations are enhancing the mechanisms of making a comprehensive effort to set up knowledge management systems and practices to effectively share and use the knowledge they already have (Henttonen, Kianto & Ritala 2016:749). The importance of knowledge sharing underlines the genetic power of individual employees; recognising that the individuals engaging in knowledge sharing decide how they want to utilise their skills and intellect, as well as direct their efforts based on personal motivation (Henttonen et al. 2016:752). Chatterjee (2014:37) suggests that if managers take part in the process of knowledge sharing, they will be able to monitor such sharing, ensuring that all employees acquire the necessary skills and expertise for the success of the organisation.

Public sector organisations generate a large amount of tacit and explicit knowledge through meetings, brainstorming and conversations, for instance during tea and lunch breaks, through emails, phone calls and other forums (Dewah & Mutula (2016:363). In local government contexts, knowledge is shared among the officials within operational sections and other departments (Schutte & Barkhuizen 2015:136).

Formal knowledge sharing takes place through official channels such as meetings Dikotla, Mahlatji and Makgahlela's (2014:853). In a study on knowledge sharing among health care professionals in Ghana, Assem and Pabbi (2016:486) found that,

knowledge was shared mostly through clinical meetings, verbal communication with colleagues, text messages and telephone conversations. Furthermore, Mosala-Bryant (2015:159), conducted a study on knowledge sharing in the public sector of Kwazulu Natal, where he found that the main avenue for knowledge sharing in the public sector was meetings between managers and staff. However, the meetings consisted of sharing information rather than technical knowledge. This finding is similar to Ramohlale (2014: 152) who noted that, the Defence Department had forums and meetings as staff members, but staff members were not necessarily guided to share knowledge, rather share information, clarify instructions and get progress on the projects which they are involved in (Ramohlale 2014:152). In addition, Badimo & Buckley (2014:3461) found that, in the South African Health Department, information was shared within the department through emails, internal memos and notice boards.

In a study on knowledge sharing systems in the South African Government Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) Motele, Denhibo & Denhibo (2015:5) found that, to facilitate knowledge sharing, project managers should share their project experiences and ways in which they dealt with specific issues. This allows the transfer of knowledge from the experienced to the less experienced among the employees and insures that their tacit knowledge is exchanged among all the employees (Motele *et al.* 2015:6). Badimo & Buckley (2014: 3464) noted that through coaching, senior managers have shared knowledge with junior staff, to help them perform their duties.

Mothamaha & Governor (2014:5) assert that forums such as women, youth, children, service providers and staff road shows are also some of the tools used to share knowledge among the Social Development Department's staff. These scholars also discovered that people who are about to leave the organisation through natural attrition or resignation are required to fill-in standard operation procedures form and are interviewed to ensure that the knowledge they acquired during their term does not leave the organisation undocumented when they resign. In this way, they are able to record processes and procedures, which they employed in performing tasks. The Director of Policy Development in the Social Development Department of the City of Johannesburg indicated that, knowledge sharing has resulted in best practices being shared, efficient programme designs, improved focus, work efficiency from workers, client-oriented staff members, and all the aforementioned has generally improved service delivery (Mothamaha & Govender (2014:5).

Ncoyini & Cilliers (2016:582) found that training is crucial for effective knowledge sharing among government employees. Through training, employees will have a better understanding of the concept of KS. This confirms what Seba, Rowely & Delbridge (2012:119) noted in a study on knowledge sharing in Dubai police force. The study shows that, the introduction of a Skills Investment Programme (SIP) to the Dubai police force, where employees who possess skills and knowledge were identified to deliver lectures and to record knowledge to help others develop their skills. In addition, Seba & Rowely (2010: 620) also conducted a study on KM in the United Kingdom (UK) police force and found that the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) was established to identify best practices in police forces on both local and national level. This was achieved through visiting most police forces in UK, where the agency has a key role in spreading best practices of knowledge management and sharing. The NPIA is helpful in identifying good practice in a certain area, and this is used as a basis for benchmarking. Therefore, most police forces in the UK depend on NPIA to identify best practice (Seba & Rowely 2010: 620). In both cases, it is clear that the main aim behind these programs, is the promotion of knowledge sharing through learning.

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is also seen as a catalytic element that facilitates the management of knowledge at all levels of government (Edoun 2016:113). ICT enables rapid searching, accessing and retrieving of information, and can support teamwork and communication among organisational members (Nkomanyane 2010:55). Nkomonyane (2010:66) found that Botswana public sector mainly uses the Internet and the Intranet to support knowledge acquisition, sharing and storing. Averweg (2008) conducted a survey of how an intranet is used to facilitate knowledge sharing in eThekweni Municipality of South Africa. The findings indicate that the intranet is a useful platform to share and access interdepartmental information; an effective way to conduct organisational interaction and the quickest focal point to disseminate and get organisational communication.

Another way of implementing the management of organisational knowledge creation is to create a "self-organising team" in which individual members collaborate to create and share new concepts (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995:21). One of the methods used for knowledge transfer by learning organisations, is through initiating communities of practice (Mannie et al. 2013:4). In a study on knowledge sharing in the South African Public sector Mkhize (2015:6) found that there are community sections of practice



(CoP), which informally share ideas, using social media platforms such as blogs and group tweets. Membership of this collaborative forum is by invitation for the qualifying prospective participants, who will be expected to make a meaningful contribution to the community. Sometimes the collaboration invited subject experts from other collaboration forums, which they achieve through inviting people outside the official government discussion group to make contributions to current issues of concern.

### **2.7.1 Factors affecting knowledge sharing in the public sector**

There are a number of factors, which negatively affect knowledge sharing in organisations. For example, lack of communication among team members, especially those in different geographical areas (Khoza & Pretorius 2016: 6, Nkomanyane 2010:52). Rowely (2012:123) identified four key factors that are currently acting as barriers to knowledge sharing, as leadership, time allocation, trust, and organisational structure. Due to work overload and environmental pressure to deliver on a timely basis, there is always a lack of time to share the existing knowledge (Khoza & Pretorius 2017: 7). Additional factors include recognition, environment, selfishness work overload, competition, race and physical distance (Ramohlale 2014:130, Khoza & Pretorius 2017: 8).

Mannie, Van Niekerk and Adendorff (2013:4) count lack of ICT infrastructure, lack of practice communities and lack of trust within organisations and even in governments as some of the barriers to knowledge sharing. They concluded that, knowledge sharing between government agencies in South Africa is insufficient and ineffective. Due to unfamiliarity with the existing technology in the organisation some team members find it difficult to make use of the knowledge. Gaffoor & Cloete (2010: 5) found that Stellenbosch local municipality runs a number of information management systems in various departments. These include the South African Municipal Resource Administration System (SAMRAS), which is a financial system; Collaborator, which is a document management system and Value-Prop, which is used for property valuations and related information. The municipality also runs a Geographic Information System (GIS). In addition, the organisation operates a database known as the Strategic Management System (SMS), which is used to capture all information and data related to the municipality's budget and integrated development plan (IDP). An e-library also exists, where personnel members have access to a number of

documents including relevant policies and legislation. The municipality also runs a useful website, from which GIS information, the e-library and other administrative information is available. This includes notices, job vacancies and links to council and staff members. However, researchers noted that these systems are not integrated. As a result, information sharing is hampered and accessibility to information sources is limited.

The public sector is characterised by bureaucratic administrative systems, where functions are specialised and assigned to specific offices (Amayah 2013:463). Although it encourages transparency, this bureaucratic tendency, tends to slow down processes aimed at improving service delivery, and encourages corrupt vices (Dewah & Mutula 2016:363). Knowledge sharing thus decreases as the level of competition within an organisation increases (Ondari-Okemwa 2009:34). Ngulube (2007:158) states that while governments, especially in the developed countries, have abandoned bureaucratic systems that hamper effective public service delivery, countries in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) have not adequately restructured public bureaucracies in response to the demands of the information society. Bureaucratic organisational cultures tend to mean that employees in the public sector often see knowledge sharing as a management responsibility and not necessarily, something that every employee should take responsibility at some point (Seba, Rowley & Delbridge 2012:115).

Most public sector organisations have no official or encouraged forums, recognition and reward for disseminating knowledge to others (Cong 2007:260). This is a typical public sector culture and has something to do with the nature of government organisation (Cong 2007: 260). The above confirms the findings by Ramohlale (2014: 151) where he discovered that the Department of Defence (DOD) had no policy for knowledge sharing, making the institutionalising of knowledge sharing impossible and non-existent. However, there are skills sharing means used in the department and information is embedded in their day-to-day activities. These activities include informal knowledge-sharing means, but they are default means in performing business functions (Ramohlale 2014:151).

Ondari-Okemwa (2009: 37) stated that many employees in the Kenyan civil service are traditional career civil servants, who cannot envisage and appreciate the potential of knowledge sharing and the benefits of knowledge leveraging. Many of these civil

servants are still cautious of sharing knowledge or information, due to the perception that celebrates individual knowledge, hence, hoarding knowledge enhance their value and competitiveness. The general work environment in the civil service of Kenya does not encourage generational distribution and sharing of knowledge.

## **2.8 Knowledge sharing strategies**

According to Mphahlele (2010:30) Knowledge sharing systems integrate the capabilities of document management and collaborative systems, along with KM mechanisms. Examples of Knowledge sharing platforms are: e-mails, video conferencing, electronic bulletin boards, computer conferencing, databases, (Mphahlele 2010:30), newsletters, conferences, workshops, websites (Tsui, Chapman, Schnier & Stewart 2006:26), intranet and Communities of practice (Mkhize 2015, Dikotla 2016, Ramohlale 2014:38, Gaffoor & Cloete 2010; Averweg 2011). For this study, the following strategies are briefly discussed: Intranet, Community of Practice (CoP), newsletters, storytelling, mentoring, forums and meetings. These strategies were selected because of their dominant usage in literature.

### **2.8.1 Intranets**

An Intranet is seen as a tool for more efficient sharing and creation of knowledge within an organisation, using both 'push' and 'pull' technologies (Averweg 2011:5). Thomas & Underwood (2015:22) support Guenther (2003: 66) in describing intranets as similar to the human body's circulatory system, in that, an intranet connects the different parts of an organisation by facilitating an easier, more effective, flow of information within the organisation.

According to Averweg (2011:6), the perceived benefit for using an intranet in an organisation is 'an effective way to conduct organisational interaction'. This includes virtual maps, charts and email transactions. When employees engage in collaborative work with fellow employees in different clusters or service units and between different hierarchical levels, which share their objectives, the context of knowledge sharing exists (Ardivicilli 2012:5). However, Gaffoor & Cloete (2010:6) and Ramohlale (2014:137) found that failure of the intranet to meet the employee's expectations might lead to it being perceived as almost non-existent in an organisation. An Intranet should therefore, be designed to support organisational needs so that it has an enabling role and is aligned with the practice of knowledge sharing (Averweg 2011:5).

### 2.8.2 Communities of Practice (CoP)

Perhaps the most widely recognized benefit of CoPs is their ability to allow for the generation and dissemination of tacit knowledge, that is, knowledge which is hard to communicate because it is mostly intuitive and embedded in a specific context (Nonaka, 1994:28). According to Mkhize (2015:4), in these communities, members get to share their experiences and learn from those who have been through the learning curve. That way, members of the community would not have to repeat the same mistakes made by those who have become experts over the years. In addition, less experienced collaborators in the community can also learn (Ardichvilli 2008:542). These communities share and exchange knowledge, norms, values, attitudes, beliefs, ideas and expertise (best practices) (Ramohlale 2014:151).

### 2.8.3 News letters

According to Tsui, Chapman, Schnier & Stewart (2006:29), newsletters are typically a collection of articles on organisational activities and related topics, which can be useful for raising awareness on new ideas and innovations, and also promote knowledge-sharing activities. Dikotla (2016:105) found that all the municipalities in Limpopo that have been researched on have newsletters which are published at least quarterly and which are available in both print and electronic formats. These municipalities include Aganang, Blouberg, Fetakgomo, Greater Letaba, Greater Tzaneen, Lepelle-Nkumpi, and Thulamela. However, since many newsletter articles are intended to reach a broad audience, which require generalised and short length content; newsletters may not be suitable for detailed communication (Tsui et al. 2006: 29). In addition, newsletters are published at certain intervals, and this may result in information being obsolete by the time the next issue is published (Dikotla 2016:105).

### 2.8.4 Storytelling

Story telling is a natural way for human beings to interact and can be easy to remember; stories can also contain embedded lessons (Dikotla 2016:105). It is defined as the practices, tools and role-play involved in communicating a story to an audience (Tobin & Snyman 2007:133). On the African continent, storytelling played a significant role in conveying knowledge in traditional cultures between people and between different generations (Moleté, Dehinbo & Dehinbo 2015:1). Socialising in a formal or informal way provides opportunities for stories to be told as people relate their experiences and it is through the medium of storytelling that people are encouraged

to share knowledge (Mitchel 2011:639). Storytelling is certainly one of the ways of getting tacit knowledge for others to use and refer to it (Mamabolo 2014:50).

#### 2.8.5 Forums and Meetings

According to the Canadian International Development Agency (2003:12), forums and meetings, refer to everything from a large conference or congress, to round-table discussions that happen between close related people or inside a larger conference, to armchair presentations or panel presentations, and any type of staff or regular meeting that brings people together. Face- to- face meetings give employees a chance to talk and listen to each other (Ramohlale 2014:38). In addition, regular meetings for the purpose of discussing work-related experiences provide an avenue for sharing knowledge that generates a collaborative environment and one through which everyone benefits (Dikotla 2016:225).

#### 2.8.6 Mentoring

Mentoring is a learning relationship between two employees (Canadian development Agency 2003:7). Mentoring programmes provide a means to facilitate transfer knowledge from experienced employees (i.e. subject matter experts) to new employees (Phaladi 2011:54). It is an effective way of helping people progress in their careers (Ramohlale 2014:38). Sharing knowledge through mentoring would ensure flow of knowledge in organisations and its availability even after an experienced and knowledgeable staff members part ways with the organisation (Dikotla 2016:107).

### 2.9 Summary of Chapter Two

This chapter provided a review of literature on knowledge sharing in organisations. It began by outlining the knowledge concept. A brief description of KM was covered, indicating that knowledge sharing is part of KM practices, hence the researcher deemed it necessary to highlight the relationship. Knowledge sharing was discussed in detail. The discussion on knowledge sharing included knowledge sharing processes defined by Nonaka's SCEI model Nonaka (1994). Factors influencing knowledge sharing in organisations were also discussed. Literature shows that organisational culture, trust, rewards and leadership are knowledge sharing factors among others. The chapter further discussed knowledge sharing in the public sector, with particular

focus on South Africa, Africa and some overseas countries. The factors affecting knowledge sharing in the public sector were also discussed. Lastly, strategies of knowledge sharing were also explored. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter three discusses the research methodology, which includes the research approach and design used in this study. The chapter also discusses the instruments, data collection and analysis methods, while explaining the stages and processes involved in each stage. The appropriate criteria to ensure trustworthiness is also discussed in detail. In conclusion, the ethical considerations applicable for this study were highlighted.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

Research is the process of undertaking or carrying out original investigation in all its forms: analysis, innovation, experiment, measurement, development, hypothesis, modelling and evaluating with a view to generating new knowledge or novel comprehension (Mavodza & Ngulube 2011:22 ; Marshall & Rossman 2016: 139). It is important to indicate that the study followed a scientific approach, because the aim of the study was building knowledge obtained from the use of a particular methodology to prove certain variables beyond reasonable doubt (Ramohlale 2014: 66). This method of acquiring knowledge, also called scientific research, it is a systematic investigation of a question, a phenomenon, or a problem using principles (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston 2013:169). One of the features used to differentiate research is by classifying it as either quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods (Ramohlale 2013: 67).

A qualitative research is an approach that allows the researcher to examine people's experiences in detail by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, visual methods, life histories or biographies (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey 2011:9). Quantitative research is essentially about collecting numerical data to explain a particular phenomenon, particular questions are answered using quantitative methods (Muijs 2013:2). Mixed methods is defined as research in which the inquirer or investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and

quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of study (Creswell 2013:2).

For this study, a qualitative research approach was used. A qualitative research can be used to provide in-depth understanding of research issues, embracing the perspectives of the study population and the context in which they live (Hennik, Hutter & Bailey 2011: 10). There are some main characteristics of qualitative research approach as conveyed by several authors, such as Creswell (2014), Hatch (2003) and Marshall & Rossman (2011). The following characteristics distinguish qualitative research from other research approaches:

Qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting, where participants experience the problem under study (Hatch 2003:91). Information was gathered through face-to-face interviews, also considering gestures as they respond. The researcher had face-to-face interactions often over time (Creswell 2014: 187).

A qualitative researcher collects data through examining documents, observing behaviour or interviewing participants (Marshall & Rossman 2011:144). They do not tend to use or rely on questionnaires or other tools for data collection (Creswell 2014:187). After collection, data is reviewed and organised.

Researchers in qualitative research use an inductive and deductive data analysis process (Hatch 2003: 94). This is where themes are built from bottom-up by organising the data into increasingly more abstract units of information, until the researcher has established a comprehensive set of themes. The researcher creates themes from the data to determine if more evidence can support each theme or whether more additional information needs to be gathered (Creswell 2014:189).

The purpose of qualitative research is to gain a detailed understanding of certain phenomenon, to identify socially constructed meanings of the phenomenon and the context in which a phenomenon occurs (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey 2011:84). In addition, qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of practical materials such as case studies (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:3). In this case, choosing senior and experienced managers in NDM and the six local municipalities as interviewees, the researcher attempted to gain a detailed type of understanding in a



bid to extract views and theories from within their 'complex personal framework of beliefs and values' (Creswell 2012:16).

### **3.3 Research design**

A case study research design was used in this study. Case study research begins with the identification of a specific case, such as an individual, a small group, an organisation, or a relationship (Creswell 2013:98). According to Creswell (2007:73), a case study involves an exploration of a "bounded system" (bounded by time, context and/or place), or single or a multiple case, over a period of time, through in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. In contrast with other methodological frameworks, Devos, Strydom, Fourche & Delport (2011:320) pointed out that a case study design has the ability to adapt to a wide range of methodological frameworks such as life history, phenomenology, grounded theory and so forth. Its strategic value lies in drawing attention to what can be learned from a single case. Guest, Namey & Mitchell (2014:15) affirms that the main purpose of a case study is to understand something that is unique to the case(s), and replicate the knowledge gained from the study to other cases and contexts.

According to Silverman (2016:89) case studies can be used to explain, describe or explore events or phenomena in the everyday contexts in which they occur. The case study lends itself well to capturing information on more explanatory 'how', 'what' and 'why' questions such as 'how' is the intervention being implemented and received on the ground.

NDM was selected as the organisation under study. Researchers regard the research design as an effective exercise to obtain background information about the intended research question (Remeny 2012:20). As such, case study design was selected for this project. This is because the researcher is part of the NDM work force, as a result, it was easy for to gather most of the information in a natural setting and during day- to- day activities. Investigating knowledge sharing practices in NDM in a true sense and real-life context satisfied the objectives of the study. One of the essential aspects of qualitative case study is that it presents an in-depth understanding of the case (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston 2013:67). To accomplish this, the

researcher collected qualitative data, through face-to face interviews (Creswell 2013:98).

### **3.4 Study Population**

According to Guest, Namey & Mitchel (2014:42) study population refers to the entire group of elements that you would under study. This is often a group of individuals, but it can also be composed of larger units such as families, institutions, communities, cities, and so on. Hennik, Hutter & Bailey (2011:85) states that a study population is often needed to determine who to recruit, and how. Furthermore, it is often defined during the conceptual design of the study, and is typically informed by published literature, previous research and the nature of the research question (Hennik et al. 2011:85). In this case, the study population consist of 178 managers from NDM. These managers consist of senior managers, deputy managers and assistant managers.

#### **3.4.1 Sample Procedures**

By studying a sample, expectations are that, valid conclusions will be drawn about a larger group (Ngulube 2005:132). A sample is part of a larger body selected to represent the whole. It is taking of a certain population as a representative of whole population. A very important issue in sampling is to determine the most adequate size of the sample (Creswell 2013:155).

A large sample size is representative but costly, and a small sample is less accurate but convenient (Bless, Higson & Smith 1995: 96, Esbensen, Minkkinen & Petersen 2005:91). Sampling is a technique and a science. Sampling is fundamentally a mass reduction achieved by the appropriate technical means and can come up with selection of a certain number of constituents (Gy, 2004:24). The sample constituted participants who were interviewed. The researcher drew a separate sample from the total population to comply with the needs of a well-executed study (Marshall & Rossman 2016:155 and Wamundila 2009:98).

#### **3.4.2 Strategic purposive sampling**

Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston (2013:113) have described purposive sampling as the selection of participants based on a certain criterion that will enable the researcher to answer their research questions. According to Walker, Farquaharson & Dempsey

(2016:67) the selection of participants is determined by attributes that the researcher wants to study. The process is known as inclusion criteria, where participants possess certain characteristics to be part of a study.

For this reason, the researcher opted to utilise purposive sampling. The sample units were selected because they have particular characteristics that enabled detailed exploration and understanding of the central theme and questions under study (Bryman 2012:91). Purposive sampling is also seen as judgmental sampling (Rubin & Barbie 2005:247). This type of sample is based completely on the judgement by the researcher; a sample is composed of elements that contain most characteristics of the population that best serve the purpose of the study (Devos, Strydom & Fouche 2011:392). In addition, Devos et al. (2011:392) suggests that in purposive sampling, the researcher must first think critically about the parameters of the population and then chose the sample accordingly. It is important for the researcher to indicate clear identification and formulation of pre-selected criteria for the selection of respondents.

Creswell (2007:125) adds that this form of sampling contributes to qualitative research in that, participants and sites are selected such that they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem under study. The study gathered information from NDM and local municipality's managers. These managers have been selected because they play a major role in the development of service delivery plans. They also play a role in ensuring that employees understand the role they play in fulfilling these plans. Hence, knowledge sharing is necessary. The researcher ensured that diversity was encompassed for a comprehensive representation.

#### 3.4.2 Sample size

According to Kumar (2011:194), a sample size is a number of units from whom a researcher intends to obtain information. Walker (2016:70) states that, a sample size needs to be large enough to answer the intended research questions and provide reasonably generalised findings. In addition, there is no magic number of participants that can be identified to indicate when this has been achieved, and the required number cannot be known beforehand (Walker et al. 2016:70). This is because case studies have special attributes that are of interest, sample sizes are generally small, usually one to several cases (Guest, Namey & Mitchell 2014:15). Scholars such as Fossey, Harvey & McDermott (2002:726), Guest, Bunce & Johnson (2006:61), and

Shaw & Holland (2014:3) suggest that, sampling in qualitative research continues until themes emerging from the research are fully developed, in the sense that, diverse instances have been explored, and further sampling is redundant.

In this case, the research focused on NDM and its local municipalities' managers. Stratified sampling procedure is a process that divides the overall population into separate subgroups and then create a sample by drawing sub samples from each of those groups (Morgan 2012:2). To implement this process, a total number of 178 managers were divided into sub groups that were relevant to the research objectives and to further ensure that data included cases from each of these subgroups. The subgroups had managers from the NDM and the six local municipalities. Subsamples were drawn from the subgroups. According to Guest, Namey & Mitchell (2017:13), stratified sampling is conducted in a much more specific manner, such as the amount of experience in an environment or degree of exposure to an intervention. Therefore, to select the specific sample, expert sampling strategy was used. The logic and power of expert sampling lie in selecting people to study or interview who can inform an inquiry through their knowledge, experience and expertise (Patton 2018:648). Nishishiba, Jones & Kraner (2017:15) suggests that some research questions may be answered well, by soliciting expert opinions. In this case, the study focused on managers who were experts in the fields of records management, Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Human Resource Management; and Integrated Development Planning (IDP). These managers' roles in the municipalities are relevant to knowledge sharing. Therefore, the selection focused on these specific sections of the selected municipalities.

The justification behind selecting these departments is that, records management is the custodian of information and knowledge in an organisation (Dikotla 2016:219). Therefore, the role of records managers concerns the accessibility of information in public bodies and the overall safe keeping of public sector information sources (Schellnack-Kelly 2014:10), which is applicable to knowledge sharing. ICT is viewed as an enabler in knowledge sharing (Averweg 2008:10). It allows easy access and retrieval of information and knowledge in various parts of an organisation (Gaffoor & Cloete 2010:8). Hence, the study included ICT as an enabler for knowledge sharing in NDM. The IDP unit ensures the coordination and alignment of planning activities in municipalities (Musitha 2012:104). The value of knowledge that is produced and

shared, during the planning processes is crucial for NDM's effectiveness. The core business of HRM is to develop employees, select and hire people, train and develop the staff, reward them and create a culture of learning (Edvardsson 2008:1). Therefore, HRM have a significant influence on the effectiveness of KM practices (Figurska 2009:2), such as knowledge sharing.

A sample size of 18 managers, out of the 178 managers were selected. The sample size for each subgroup (municipality) was based on the number of managers each municipality has in the fields under study. It is worth noting that, some municipalities comprised of a smaller number of managers, therefore one manager was responsible for two or more areas of speciality. In the larger municipalities, one manager was responsible for one area of speciality, hence the larger number of managers selected from these municipalities. In that regard, Daniel (2012:338) states that in most cases, specific sizes are not a target in purposive sampling. The sample size is determined by the researcher, considering that a well-chosen sample generates enough data for the study (Suter 2014:242). In this case, the sample size of 18 managers was deemed enough by the researcher to answer the research questions.

This section shows the number of managers for each local municipality and NDM. Three managers selected from NDM, were in the corporate services department (manager is responsible for human resource management and records management), ICT and the IDP Unit. Three managers were also selected from Steve Tshwete Local Municipality. These managers were from corporate services department (manager is responsible for human resource management and records management), ICT and the IDP Unit. In Emakhazeni Local Municipality, two managers were selected from corporate services department, (the manager is responsible for ICT, Human resource management and records management) and IDP Unit. In Emalahleni local municipality, four managers were selected from human resource management, records management, ICT and IDP. In Thembisile Hani Local Municipality, two managers were selected from corporate services department (responsible for records management, human resource management and ICT) and IDP Unit. In Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality, two managers were selected from corporate services department (responsible for ICT, Human resource management and records management) and IDP Unit. In Victor Khanye Local Municipality, two managers were selected from

corporate services department (responsible for ICT, Human resource management and records management) and IDP Unit.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

This section details sources used to collect data, which include data collection methods, as well as data collection instruments used. Data collection method refers to the systematic approach, techniques and tools used to collect data (Voce, 2005:61).

#### **3.5.1 Interviews**

In-depth interviews were used to collect data. In depth interviews are particularly a useful method for examining the social world from research participants point of view of (Silverman 2011:137). Rubin & Rubin (2012:3) states that, through in depth-interviews, the researcher is able to obtain detailed information, relating to the experiences, motives and opinions of others. As a result, the researcher can learn to perceive situations differently and from the perspectives of others. The researcher was searching for rich and detailed information, not 'yes' or 'no', agree or disagree thype of responses. Open-ended questions were used, which means the interviewees responded in ways they better understood the topic. One advantage of using open-ended questions is that one can get information not anticipated by the researcher (Guest, Namey & Mitchel 2014:22). The response could be expressed by elaborating on answers, disagreeing with the question, or raising new issues (Rubin & Rubin 2012: 29).

One of the most important aspects of the interviewer is to show that the participant's views are valuable and useful. The generativity of the interview depends on both partners and their willingness to engage in a deep discussion about the topic of interest (King & Horrocks 2010:148). As Rubin & Rubin (2012:71) noted that, "an interview is literally an interchange of views between two persons". However, the qualitative researcher should bring some skills and sensibility to the interview.

Interviews have limitations. One common shortcoming of interviews is that they only provide access to what people say and, not what they do (Guest, Namey & Mitchel 2013:7). Interviews are often meetings that depend on trust. (Marshall & Rossman (2016:150), note that in some cases, participants may not be willing or not comfortable sharing all that the interviewer hopes to explore. Some may not be able to find the words which convey their thoughts. Also, the interviewer may not ask questions that

motivate detailed stories from participants, due to lack of fluency in or familiarity with the local language (King & Horrocks 2010:78).

This means that, a kind of a relationship can be fostered between the interviewer and the participants, to allow a smooth flow of information, such that all the required data is obtained. Seidman (2013: 97) advocates an approach that steps a thin line between being friendly and developing a friendship with the participants. He describes his understanding of this relationship as respect, interest and good manners.

Rubin & Rubin (2012:36) for example, promote a style of interviewing that they call 'responsive interviewing' that emphasises the importance of building a relationship of trust between the interviewer and the interviewee, which that leads to a more give-and take conversation. They argue that responsive interviews are gentler than other interviewing styles, with minimal confrontation, where the personality of both the interviewer and interviewee will impact on the questioning, and a degree of mutuality is required from both parties.

The section below discusses some of the aspects considered for the success of qualitative interview.

#### 3.5.1.1 Interview setting

The first requirement of the interview environment is that it should be as comfortable as possible, for both the participants and for the researcher (Guest, Namey & Mitchel 2013:13). Being comfortable includes, psychological comfort and privacy for the interview setting (King & Horrocks 2010:42). The researcher ensured that situations where interruptions might occur were circumvented. Interviews were conducted in small NDM boardrooms, and other local municipalities conducted their interviews were conducted in the comfort of the participant's offices. Cell phones were switched off and a note on the door was placed in request for privacy.

#### 3.5.1.2 Recording

In most qualitative research traditions, a full record of each interview is strongly recommended. Usually, this means using some form of audio recording, although in some proportion of studies video recording can be used (King & Horrocks 2010: 44). A digital tape-recorder was used to record the interviews. Digital equipment was chosen for its comprehensive mechanism to produce excellent recording quality, and

audio files can be downloaded directly to a computer enabling the use of specialist transcription software (King & Horrocks 2010: 45). The researcher was familiar with the operations of the equipment before the interviews.

#### 3.5.1.3 Notetaking

According to D'Ardene & Collins (2015:5), interview notes can be written using a template. The purpose of the template is to ensure that, for each interview, relevant data from all sources (e.g. audio recordings, observations, completed questionnaires) are contained in a single document. Having a template ensures that all interviews are written up in a consistent way, and all findings described in the same order and with a similar degree of detail. In addition, keeping a handwritten record can be necessary, for instance, when some participants do not give recording consent, or where there is technical failure on equipment (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson 2002:728).

In some instances, participants may refuse to be recorded, due to suspicion about what may be done with recordings and who may have access to them (King & Horrocks 2010:47). If such a situation arises, it is worth ensuring that the participant fully understood the notion of confidentiality (Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti & McKinney 2012: 479). Marshall & Rossman (2016: 48), state the researcher should not put pressure on the participant to change their mind. If the participant persists the researcher has to rely on taking notes.

#### 3.5.2 Data collection tool

An interview guide was developed. An interview guide is a list of questions used by the interviewer, mainly as a memory aide during the interview. (Hennink et al 2011:112). According to King & Horrocks (2010:35) an interview guide is used in qualitative interviews to outline the main topics the researcher would like to cover, but the phrasing of questions and the order in which they are asked, are flexible, and allows the participants to lead the interaction in unanticipated directions. The precise format of interview guides varies, depending on the needs of different methodological traditions in qualitative research, as well as the personal preferences of individual researchers. The interview guide was developed in line with the following structure, according to Hennink et al. (2011: 112):



- Introduction: consists of points to remind the interviewer of what to tell the participant at the beginning of the interview. The introductory part includes, introducing the researcher and explaining the purpose of the study and general background questions about for the participants.
- Opening questions: these questions are aimed at building relationship with the participants, for them to feel comfortable enough to start telling their stories throughout the key questions.
- Key questions: these questions are based on the research topic and were designed to ask the main questions to meet the research objectives.
- Closing questions: these questions were general questions to conclude the interview.

### **3.6 Trustworthiness and Quality**

Trustworthiness of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Pilot & Beck, 2014:141). The specific procedures employed, such as the line of questioning pursued in data gathering sessions and the methods of data analysis, were derived, where possible, from those that have been successfully utilised in previous comparable projects (Shenton 2004:64). The integrity of findings lies in the data and that the researcher's ability to adequately put the data together, analytic processes, and findings in such a way that the reader is able to confirm the adequacy of the findings (Morrow 2005:252) and that findings are consistent and could be duplicated (Connelly 2016:435).

Marshall & Rossman (2016:67) further recommends that trustworthy information requires the interviewer not to coerce people to answer questions that they are not sure of, because they would try to answer, but information provided may not be truthful. Therefore, to enhance trustworthiness, the researcher recorded every step undertaken during data collection. The researcher also ensured that the recorded interviews were transcribed as soon as the interviews were conducted, to avoid forgetting what was said and what was implied. The findings of the study were then compared with previous studies conducted to confirm competence. The researcher contends that this was adequate to justify similar results should another researcher embarks on a similar study.

### **3.7 Data presentation and analysis**

Qualitative data analysis is sometimes described as a process of developing evidence-based interpretations of data by applying appropriate techniques to ensure that study findings are well rooted in data (Hennink et al. 2011:205). It starts with the collection of qualitative data and then process it through analytic procedures, into a clear, understandable, insightful, trustworthy and even original analysis (Gibbs 2013:2). Data analysis involves arranging data into controllable themes, patterns, trends and relationships (Babbie & Mouton 2004:109). The aim of analysis is to understand various elements from the data through an assessment of relationships between concepts, constructs or variables (Wilig 2014:16). In addition, the researcher will utilise the data analysis, to see whether any patterns or trends can be identified (Babbie & Mouton 2004:109). Over the course of the process of data analysis, the raw data will be arranged in a user-friendly manner. The interview results were tallied, so that people can see how many people responded to the interview, and how people responded to specific questions on knowledge sharing practices in NDM.

There are many alternatives of qualitative research involving many forms of data analysis, which include interview transcripts, field notes, conversational analysis, and visual data, whether photographs, film, or observations of internet occurrences (O'Dwyer & Bernauer 2014:192). In this study, qualitative data analysis is presented through analytic explanations and descriptions.

To perform the data analysis exercise, the following steps were followed, as suggested by Ritchie (2014: 152). As indicated earlier, the interview notes were taken during the data collection process. The first step in the data presentation and analysis process was to organise the interview notes for analysis. According to D'Ardenne & Collins (2015:5), interview notes can be written using a template. The purpose of the template is to ensure that, for each interview, relevant data from all sources (e.g. audio recordings, observations, completed questionnaires) are contained in a single document. For this study, data were from audio recordings. A template ensures that all interviews are written up in a consistent way, with all findings being described in the same order and with a similar degree of detail (D'Ardenne & Collins 2015:5).

The first step was to read through the recorded text at least once without making an attempt to code it. This was to ensure that the researcher was familiar with it as a

whole. According to Ritchie (2014:152), it is important for the researcher to familiarise themselves with the transcript to refer back to something they said earlier or forward to something they said later (or both).

Transcription here refers to any graphic representation of selective aspects of verbal, prosodic and paralinguistic behavior (Kowal & O'Connell 2013:4). The study overview is limited to transcription of vocal behavior. The researcher transcribed the recorded data collected using the optical character recognition (OCR) software. This type of software is used for speech recognition (Gibbs 2007:17). The software produced word-processing files from the voice recordings.

The next step was to highlight anything in the transcript that might help the researcher to understand the participants' views, experiences and perceptions as they relate to the topic under study, and to write a brief comment indicating what is of interest in the highlighted text. In this case, the researcher highlighted views that came out of the interviews about knowledge sharing practices in NDM, and how the participants perceive these practices in relation to coordination of service delivery plans. The comments were then compiled on a separate sheet for each participant.

The next step was to use the preliminary comments to define descriptive codes. According to Ritchie et al. (2014:153), the comments should stay relatively close to the data, avoiding the temptation to speculate on what might lie behind what the participant has said. Some of the initial comments were found not to be relevant to the analysis and were not included.

The next step was to analyse the data using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis system (CAQDAS), which is qualitative data analysis software. The software manages the coding and the retrieval of texts and helps to examine features and relationships in the texts (Gibbs 2012:0).

According to Silver & Lewis (2017:11) CAQDAS packages provide 'mapping', 'modelling' or 'networking' tools, which enable the researcher to interrogate connections according to earlier work, or to create connections according to the current thinking in (sub) sets. Most of the programs can also import images in a variety of common formats, as well as audio and video files, and further, provide ways of viewing and coding such media (Gibbs 2013:7). In addition, the programs help

researchers to keep everything neat and tidy and make it easy to find the material they need later in the analysis (Gibbs 2013:8).

The final step was to make an interpretation from the summaries, which were produced through the data analysis software. According to Wilig (2014:2), data interpretation is the process of making collected data meaningful. Qualitative researchers need to ask questions about the data meaning and significance; make connections between different components and aspects of the data in order to increase their understanding (Wilig 2014:2). Based on the above processes, the researcher was able to summarise the findings of the study and came up with recommendations.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

According to Blumberg, Copper & Schindler (2011:92) research ethics address not the question of how to use methodology in a proper way to conduct sound research, but the question of how the available methodology may be used in the 'right' way. This suggests that the researcher should consider and find the best solution to ensure that both theoretical methods and real-life practicality are combined to conduct the interviews in an ethical manner, whilst striving to acquire information and findings within the context of the research study (Krysik & Finn 2013:56). The following section briefly discusses the ethics that were considered during this study.

#### *Respect for no harm*

According to Babbie (2007: 27) the basic ethical rule of social research is that it must bring no harm to participants. Since, everything we do in life can possibly harm someone and therefore, researchers are advised to weigh the risks against the importance and possible benefits of the specific research project. Creswell (2003:64) adds that the researcher has an ethical obligation to protect participants within all reasonable limits; any form of physical and emotional discomfort that may occur should be thoroughly circumvented and participants should be informed about the potential impact of the investigation beforehand. Therefore, the researcher should communicate the benefits and risks of the study to respondents (Dikotla 2016:165). It

was upon the researcher, that all the best practices were strictly applied in and throughout the research and interview process.

### *Informed consent*

Obtaining informed consent implies that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the expected duration of the participant's involvement, the procedures which will be followed during the investigation, the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers (to which respondents may be may be exposed to), as well as the credibility of the researcher should be informed to the participant and permission to be granted beforehand (Devos, Strydom & Fouche (2011:117) & Marzano (2012:2). Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler (2011: 99) suggests that before the interview or during the opening of the discussion, the purpose and the importance of the study should be clearly communicated to participants. The researcher should acknowledge the significance of the information gathered from the interview their willingness to participate will largely contribute to the success of the study (Israel 2015:3). Consent forms entailing assurances of confidentiality should be read by participants beforehand (Kaiser 2012:5). Respondents must also be given an opportunity to ask questions before the study commences as well as during the interview (Devos et al. 2011:118). According to Rubin & Babbie (2010:71), participation should always be voluntary and no one should be forced to participate in a research project. The researcher ensured that a signed written consent was obtained from all eighteen respondents prior to the data collection process.

### *Confidentiality*

According to Waller, Farquharson & Dempsey (2016:48), it is a norm in social research to ensure participant confidentiality. In practice, confidentiality typically means ensuring that no one other than the researcher knows who participated in a study (Kaiser 2012:1). Participants are promised that their identity will be kept confidential at all times. This means that participants' words/responses will not be associated with their identity (Miller & Linda 2014:7).

Confidentiality was also ensured, through assuring participants absolute anonymity by means of an informed consent form (Appendix 1) prior to the process of interviews. A

written confirmation (consent form) was communicated to all participants before each interview, and that all information submitted by participants would be treated confidentially, where it will not be used for any purpose outside the scope of this study. The researcher assured the participants that information will be safeguarded against unwanted exposure. This means that information of those who took part in the study was and will not be disclosed. It also means that reports were kept confidential to protect their identity.

### **3.9 Summary of chapter three**

Chapter three discussed the research methodology employed to conduct the study. The research methodology covered the research qualitative approach that was used. The research design used is the case study of Nkangala District Municipality. The population of the study was also discussed. Managers of Nkangala District Municipality and the six local municipalities were identified as the population of the study. Eighteen managers constituted the final sample size that was selected.

Data collection was conducted through interviews, which were recorded, and field notes. Accuracy of the study was also discussed and was achieved through interviewing participants who are expert in the field relating to the topic. As soon as the interviews were conducted, transcription was done to avoid forgetting what was said and implied. The data analysis process was also discussed, highlighting the steps that were followed. The steps included reading through recorded text, highlighting the main points, defining descriptive codes and lastly, using the qualitative data analysis software used for coding and retrieval of text and making interpretations from the summaries. Ethical considerations were also discussed. These included protecting participants from any harm, voluntary participation, obtaining informed consent and ensuring confidentiality of participants.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the study. The first section focuses on the level of understanding on knowledge sharing concepts in NDM, while the second section covers the level of knowledge sharing practices. The last section presents the challenges hindering knowledge sharing activities and processes in NDM. Data was collected using qualitative methods. Interviews were conducted with eighteen managers from six local municipalities including NDM. Findings are presented and discussed in the last section of this chapter.

### 4.2 Data Presentation

Presentation of the study findings was guided by the objectives of this study. Table 3 below maps the research objectives to the themes in the findings.

**Table 2: Alignment of the research objectives to the themes**

Research Objectives	Themes in chapter 5
	Demographic information of respondents/participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To investigate the level of understanding of knowledge sharing in NDM.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low understanding of the KS concept in municipalities.</li><li>• Positive view that KS may lead to improved service delivery.</li><li>• Positive view that culture, structure, rewards and trust could encourage KS in municipalities.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To determine the knowledge sharing practices in NDM</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• KS practices conducted in a fragmented manner.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDM and local municipalities work in silos.</li> <li>• NDM has a potential to facilitate KS with the use of ICT.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To establish the challenges of knowledge sharing practices in NDM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of strategies/policies to guide KS initiatives.</li> <li>• Lack of coordination amongst the NDM and the local municipalities.</li> <li>• Lack of employee ICT skills for effective KS.</li> <li>• Low level of ICT infrastructure to support effective KS.</li> </ul>

This chapter does not reveal the names of the participants. This is because the researcher wanted to ensure that participant's identity is protected; and also, preserve their confidentiality and anonymity.

### 4.3 Background of the participants

There are six local municipalities in NDM. The recruitment of participants was determined by relevant characteristics in the target division, their position of employment and expertise. The total number of participants interviewed were 18. The group of participants comprised of managers from the IDP Section, records management, corporate services and ICT sections. From the IDP section there were 6, records management 2, Corporate Services 4 and ICT 6. In terms of gender distribution, 12 were males and 6 were females, with whom 17 black and 1 white. The age distribution was: 31-34 years: 2, 35-39 years: 6, 40-45 years: 4, 46 and above: 6. the level of formal education for the participants included: 7 junior degrees and 11 of the managers hold post graduate degrees. Lastly, years of experience in the municipality were as follows: 6:1-5 years, 6:6-10 years, 3:11-15 years and 3:16-20 years.



Participant's demographic background plays a crucial role in the selection process and data analysis. Thus, according to Marchant (2018:2) demographics are crucial to any study because they define the population and the sample. Knowing the demographic characteristics of any given sample respondents allow the researcher to have an indication of how closely the sample resembles the population (Stoulenborough 2011:2). Therefore, collecting demographic information is significant specifically for research purposes (Lee & Schuele 2012:3). Demographic information assisted the researcher with an overview of all the managers working under NDM, which contributed towards analysis. The significance of age, race, and gender in defining a population sample justifies a representative sample to reach a target sample enough to make generalisations.

#### **4.4 Interview Themes**

This section focuses on the raw responses from the participants, collected during the interviews. The responses were centred on the current situations and experiences of Knowledge sharing within the local municipalities that they serve.

##### **4.4.1 Participants' level of understanding of the knowledge-sharing concept**

This section of the interview sought to establish the level of understanding of knowledge sharing concept in a local government setting. Fourteen participants indicated little understanding of knowledge sharing. Their responses seemed to be a guess of what knowledge sharing could be. Four respondents said that they had no idea about knowledge sharing concept. The following are some of the responses:

*"I cannot say I fully understand what knowledge sharing is, in a local government, but I think it is about collaboration of efforts, where one has to pass on the knowledge about what each individual or department does...."* **[Participant 1]**

*"...Knowledge sharing is not a popular concept in local government...little is known about the concept...I would assume that it is sharing what an individual has acquired through the years of experience.....on top of that sharing the day to day business of the municipality with your subordinates and other colleagues..."* **[Participant 2]**

*“ .... I think it is about sharing what we know to address service delivery challenges we face in our municipalities....in some cases we can even learn from other municipalities if we share the best practices... Steve Tshwete (local municipality) is a good example. They have obtained a clean audit for as long as they (Steve Tshwete local municipality) have been in existence...other municipalities in the district (NDM) should be willing to learn how Steve Tshwete (local municipality) is doing it.....that’s what I think knowledge sharing should be all about...” [Participant 3]*

*“.... my quick guess would be that, knowledge sharing involves proper handing over of duties....one example is when a new municipal manager, senior manager or any other employee assumes duties....knowledge sharing should play a role in ensuring that the new person is well equipped to immediately start working, instead of spending the first six months finding their foot...” [Participant 4]*

*“... I guess it is sharing what you know with others to perform better to deliver services” [Participant 5]*

*“...It’s the flow of official information in a municipality...” [Participant 6]*

*“...This is kind of difficult...but I think it is about sharing what we know and effectively circulates it in a municipality...” [Participant 7]*

*“.....it is about showing others how work is done in a particular municipality.....so I think the process of skills development, inductions, internship programmes and so on play a major role in achieving just that (knowledge sharing)...” [Participant 8]*

*“... it is sharing knowledge to benefit your colleagues...” [Participant 9]*

*“...well I would assume its sharing best practices within our municipalities to improve services...” [Participant 10]*

*“...it is giving advice that could enhance community development...” [Participant 11]*

*“...openly or willingly exchange what we know through communication channels that are at our disposal in the municipality...” [Participant 13]*

*“...providing information that could be useful to the municipality...” [Participant 16]*

*“...sharing the duties that you perform...” [Participant 18]*

About four of the participants indicated that they were not familiar with the concept of knowledge sharing, because it is not common phenomenon in local governments. The responses were as follows:

*“... I wouldn’t really know what knowledge sharing is, because no one talks about it here (municipality)....”* **[Participant 12]**

*“...I don’t know really...maybe if I am given a clue of the idea...”* **[Participant 14]**

*“.....It is hard to say....”***[Participant 15]**

*“....I have no idea what knowledge sharing is in a municipality”* **[Participant 17]**

The above responses show that managers in NDM have little understanding on knowledge sharing concept. This acknowledges (Gaffoor & Cloete (2010:5) & Dikotla (2016:229) who found that, concepts of knowledge management and knowledge sharing were still imprecise and unusual in local government. Although the participants regarded themselves as uninformed on knowledge sharing, their responses covered some of the aspects of knowledge sharing in a typical public sector organisation. Some researchers mentioned some of these aspects, where knowledge sharing involves sharing experiences through on-job training (Nonaka 1994:19), assimilation of knowledge by employees (Van der Meer 2013:254), provision of tasks information to help others solve problems and develop new ideas (Amayah 2013:455) or implement policies or procedures (Wang & Noe 2010:117). In addition, knowledge sharing enables subordinates to take over certain responsibilities from their superiors in the office (Boateng & Agyemang 2015: 492).

Some managers in NDM believe that knowledge sharing can assist NDM municipalities in learning from best practices from other municipalities within NDM. From the responses, it emerged that only two municipalities (NDM & Steve Tshwete) have managed to obtain a clean audit opinion in the past few years respectively. This gives an indication that due to inadequate understanding of the concept of knowledge sharing, some municipalities within the NDM have failed to learn from the well performing municipalities, hence suffered poor performance outcomes. Best practice enables an organisation to improve the quality of services provided; avoid duplication of effort, reduce the need to redo work; and save money through increased efficiency and productivity (Al-Rasheed & Berri 2016:159). Therefore, sharing of knowledge

between employees, departments and across the municipalities is essential to transfer individual and group knowledge into organisational knowledge, which leads to the improvement of organisational performance (Islam, *et al.*, 2011:5900). If knowledge sharing takes place, municipalities will know the shortcomings and potencies in their previous projects for instance, and if such experiences are shared, there will be better and improved ways to solve problems on new projects (Dikotla, Mahlatji & Makgahlela 2014:855).

#### **4.4.2 Effective knowledge sharing and service delivery in NDM**

This section sought to establish whether the participants perceived knowledge sharing as a tool that could improve service delivery in NDM. Ondari-Okemwa & Smit (2009:37) emphasises that KM practices such as knowledge sharing has a potential to improve service delivery in the public service.

Thirteen respondents positively responded to knowledge sharing as one of the progressive effects of service delivery. The responses are presented as follows:

*“I think knowledge sharing could play a major role in improving service delivery...if our plans (NDM) can be aligned with those of local municipalities, it could minimise duplication of efforts, where time and money is wasted.....there have been cases whereby money was wasted on a single project being planned by the district and the local municipality....because we do not share information, we end up compromising service delivery....the thing is a budget cannot be moved immediately to do something else, there are also processes involved, which may take some time to complete..”*

**[Participant 1]**

*“...When everyone in the institution(municipality) is glued on what the municipality wants to achieve....or rather the goals of the municipality, it will be easier for them (the staff) to serve the communities with a purpose.....knowledge sharing will assist in getting all staff and stakeholders knowledgeable and ready to perform.”* **[Participant 2]**

*“... I believe that we have an obligation as municipalities to provide good services to our communities....so if we share knowledge amongst ourselves and with the*

*community on how service delivery processes are undertaken.....it could lead to excellent provision of services...” [Participant 3]*

*“...We will not experience community protests if we share knowledge.....our communities will precisely understand processes of delivering services....furthermore, as the service providers, we will be in a good position to explain issues to them(the communities) if we know.” [Participant 4]*

*“...I think internal knowledge sharing can help us (municipalities) follow procedures in a correct way.... for example, some colleagues do not understand what a clean audit outcome is... the importance of obtaining a clean audit, and what is involved in order for a municipality to obtain one....as a result people are doing wrong things.... compromising service delivery because they lack knowledge....” [Participant 5]*

*“... People need knowledge to deliver services... so sharing knowledge amongst each other can accomplish improved delivery of services.” [Participant 6]*

*“ ..I think proper knowledge flow may result in effective delivery of services...”[Participant 7]*

*“...I definitely think knowledge sharing can improve service delivery...communities will not protest if they have knowledge about services...” [Participant 8]*

*“..I guess so (knowledge sharing and improving service delivery)...it’s just that it requires a lot of effort” [Participant 9]*

*“... I believe knowledge sharing can improve services....I can imagine that a lot could be achieved in delivering services in a municipality with knowledge sharing systems...” [Participant 10]*

*“... I think knowledge is essential in a municipality.....so, the more it (knowledge) is shared, the better for service delivery.” [Participant 11]*

*“..Knowledge sharing can provide guidance on how services should be provided..” [Participant 15]*

*“... It (knowledge sharing) could help us to make good decisions....and good decisions may lead to improved delivery of services...” [Participant 18]*

About three respondents indicated that, knowledge sharing could improve service delivery; however, other aspects of organisational performance need to be looked into. The responses are as follows:

*“...knowledge sharing for service delivery could be a good idea, but the thing is, knowledge sharing is broader...and it is still not there yet (in our municipalities)... so it needs to be introduced ,explained or translated to others before we can start with the knowledge sharing initiatives... then service delivery can follow.” [Participant 12]*

*“...I think there’s a lot of processes and effort involved before we can say knowledge sharing improves service delivery...we need people with the right attitudes and approaches to reach to that state (knowledge sharing)...” [Participant 13]*

*“...there are other aspects involved in delivering services other than knowledge alone...so I don’t see it happening anytime soon.” [Participant 14]*

About two participants indicated that it is not possible for knowledge sharing to improve service delivery in a public sector like the NDM. Their responses are as follows:

*“...I don’t see that (improving service delivery) happening....there’s too much politics and interference going on in municipalities...” [Participant 16]*

*“...If we are being realistic...I don’t think that (knowledge sharing improving service delivery) could happen in this municipality or any other municipality....the recruitment of former politicians into office has spoilt the game...no one can tell them(ex-politicians) what to do...” [Participant 17]*

The responses above indicate that managers in NDM have a positive view on knowledge sharing, leading to improved service delivery. This finding confirms findings by Mothamaha & Govender (2014:7), where they discovered that knowledge sharing initiatives in the City of Johannesburg resulted in improved service delivery. This is further confirmed by Mosala-Bryant (2015: 198) and Komanyane (2013:52) who found that senior managers in the public sector recognised that service delivery is a major government mandate and as such, there is improvement in service delivery through knowledge sharing. The study recognised that there is a link between the levels of management’s understanding of knowledge sharing concept and service delivery

performance. From the responses, sufficient knowledge sharing on service delivery processes and the goals that need to be achieved by NDM may help improve performance. Respondents also indicated that this knowledge might help management to make good decisions and avoid mistakes that may compromise service delivery.

Some managers argue that knowledge sharing can only improve service delivery if other aspects of service delivery, such as interference from politicians and recruitment of former politicians are dealt with. This behaviour is in line with Yawa (2016:159) who found that the interference of politicians in the appointment of key positions of the public sector makes it difficult for officials to do their duties. It further leads to constant power struggles, which stumble into service delivery problems (de Visser 2009:2). This finding indicates that, lack of knowledge sharing in NDM has led to councillors and officials in NDM struggling to define clear roles amongst themselves. As a result, service delivery has been compromised. Thornhill (2012:58) states that if there is lack of clarity regarding responsibilities, municipalities cannot provide the services required.

#### **4.4.3 Do you consider yourself as knowing what others do not know?**

This question was intended to establish the extent to which NDM managers acknowledges the knowledge they may possess, which is necessary for knowledge sharing to take place in NDM. All eighteen participants indicated that they do know what others do not know. These are some of the responses:

*“....we are not performing the same functions within the municipality, so a person from technical services department may not know what exactly a person from HR does...”* [Participant 1]

*“...as a senior person in my department, junior employees may not know what management functions entails....so yes I consider myself to know what others do not know....”* [Participant 2]

*“Our experiences vary...so I'm assuming that long serving managers and colleagues know what others do not know....”* [Participant 5]

*“....circumstances in our municipalities differ....so I think that I do know what my colleagues from other municipalities may not know.....”* [Participant 11]

*“...to some extent I do know what others do not know...we have various backgrounds and experiences...”* **[Participant 13]**

Responses above show that managers in NDM acknowledge that they possess individual knowledge, based on their experiences, nature of work as well as various circumstances in different municipalities. Knowledge born of experience recognises familiar patterns and can make connections between what is happening now and what happened then (Davenport 200:6). As such, knowledge sharing is important in government, because no single individual possesses a combination of knowledge, skills and authority to complete a procedure without some input from others (Dikotla, Malatji & Makgahlela 2014: 848). This finding further indicates that NDM is capable of participating in knowledge sharing activities, by making use of the knowledge that the managers have. This confirms the finding by Schutte & Barkhuizen (2013:139), who established that, through sharing, officials within the local government disseminate their thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, and experience, which can encourage team cohesiveness and motivation within a group to achieve the set goals.

#### **4.4.4 Encouragement to share knowledge**

Participants were asked about factors that would encourage them to share knowledge. This part of the interview sought to establish whether there are factors, such as culture, structure, rewards, and ICT tools among others that would encourage NDM managers to share knowledge. Most public service employees require extrinsic motivators to encourage them to share knowledge (Mosala-Bryant 2016:257). These include trust, recognition of expertise, incentives and rewards (Dikotla 2016: 255) to name a few. All eighteen participants touched on one or more factors that motivate knowledge sharing. Therefore, the responses are more than the number of participants.

##### **4.4.4.1 Culture, structure and leadership**

All eighteen participants indicated that organisational culture, structure and leadership played a crucial role in encouraging them to share their knowledge. The following are their responses:

*“....I guess culture and the reporting channels amounts to proper knowledge sharing...”* **[Participant 1]**



*“...if we could have a session in this municipality, where we share knowledge on our work ...I think that could encourage me to share my knowledge more...” [Participant 2]*

*“...Leadership is the channel for planning and implementation of any knowledge sharing process...” [Participant 3]*

*“...It will not be easy to share when others in the institution (municipality) do not know the importance of sharing...so once all of us are aware of knowledge sharing...I think I can share my knowledge...” [Participant 4]*

*“...I have no courage to share my knowledge because, the environment of the municipality does not promote sharing...you are not sure whether people care to listen to what you want to say.....” [Participant 5]*

*“...a knowledge sharing guide...” [Participant 6]*

*“...proper channels for knowledge sharing...” [Participant 7]*

*“...continuous encouragement to share knowledge from executive management and amongst ourselves ....” [Participant 8]*

*“A policy on knowledge sharing could encourage me to share my knowledge....because there would be a guide on how...if the value of knowledge sharing is not clearly defined, knowledge sharing initiatives may suffer....” [Participant 9]*

*“I can share my knowledge if I can be taught how.....” [Participant 10]*

*“...If the culture of the municipality allows knowledge sharing. I would definitely share my knowledge and in turn expect others to do the same...” [Participant 11]*

*“I think if the reporting structure was flexible.....we could be encouraged to share our knowledge ....I am raising this point in a sense that the knowledge should be cascaded to the lower level employees and you find that it takes time to reach them (junior staff)...” [Participant 12]*

*“...We should be afforded time, specifically for sharing what we know...” [Participant 13]*

*“....culture and leadership could play a major role in encouraging me and others to share our knowledge...” [Participant 14]*

*“...I think the municipal executives are the ones who can ensure that knowledge sharing takes place...” [Participant 15]*

*“....Management could contribute by designing and supporting knowledge sharing activities....” [Participant 16]*

*“I think the whole knowledge sharing issue lies on the leadership and culture...the other aspects would be a result of a leadership initiatives....” [Participant 17]*

*“...necessary tools and motivation...” [Participant 18]*

The responses above indicate that managers in NDM believe that culture, structure and leadership, which supports knowledge sharing could encourage them to share their knowledge. Top management must come to the realisation that knowledge needs to be nurtured, supported and cared for (Nonaka & Konno 1998:53). From the responses provided, there is no formal culture for knowledge sharing in NDM. An indication from some of the respondents was that they would be willing to share their knowledge if formal opportunities and an encouraging environment to share are available. If the manager does not allocate time for knowledge sharing, it shows that the manager does not support the exchange of knowledge among employees (Seba, Roweley & Delbridge 2012:120). Khoza & Pretorius (2016:3) stresses that if managers take part in the process of knowledge sharing, they will be able to monitor such sharing, ensuring that all employees acquire the necessary skills and expertise for the success of the organisation. Therefore, knowledge sharing can only work if the culture of an organisation promotes it (Nkomanyane 2010:51).

The respondents also indicated that the flexible reporting structure of NDM could make it more encouraging for them to share knowledge. Rigid organisational structures or very hierarchical and which have restrictive boundaries inhibit knowledge sharing (Underwood & Smit 2012:13). Ncoyini (2016:7) states that the reporting procedures in current municipal structures consume an excessive amount of time for knowledge to filter through every level of the organisation. Ondari-Okemwa (2011:34) found that

within any bureaucratic structure, such as the public sector, there is an unspoken motivation not to share knowledge.

#### 4.4.4.2 ICT

Seven participants indicated that access to reliable ICT platforms could encourage them to share their knowledge. Eight participants indicated that ICT would not motivate them to share their knowledge. Below are their responses:

*“...having the correct resources for sharing like ICT infrastructure could encourage me to share knowledge more....some of us do not like sitting in meetings, so we prefer technology to communicate....”* **[Participant 4]**

*“...access to social media platforms for the purposes of sharing knowledge about the work that I do could encourage me to share knowledge...”* **[Participant 7]**

*“....for me ICT could work better for knowledge sharing...it’s (ICT) what I do every day....”* **[Participant 8]**

*“... ICT is my field....so I would use it effectively than other means, as long as it is fully permitted by the municipality...”* **[Participant 9]**

*“...we are living in an advanced ICT world...so digital platform could go a long way in helping me share knowledge...its quick and convenient for most of us...”* **[Participant 11]**

*“....ICT platforms for sharing knowledge would make life easier for many of us....”* **[Participant 12]**

*“....with ICT platforms available, I would share my knowledge voluntarily...”* **[Participant 14]**

Eight participants indicated that ICT would not encourage them to participate in knowledge sharing activities. The following are their responses:

*“...I struggle with the use of ICT...so I wouldn’t be efficient in sharing on that platform...”* **[Participant 1]**

*“...I think for the younger generations ICT could work best...if taught, I could immediately try and share my knowledge...”* **[Participant 2]**

*“....I am not really computer literate...I would rather use other options to share my knowledge than using electronic gadgets...”[Participant 3]*

*“....I wouldn’t go the ICT route ....it has its own people...otherwise, generally, it could be a tool for knowledge sharing...”[Participant 5]*

*“....honestly sharing my knowledge using ICT would be a challenge for me...its ok that I use it to carry out some of my duties, but not for sharing knowledge...” [Participant 6]*

*“...ICT could be good for the young ones...” [Participant 10]*

*“....These ICT tools require time and focus to operate in them...I wouldn’t find time to concentrate on them....” [Participant 11]*

*“....Time to be on the social media channels is not there for me...however, it’s a good platform to share knowledge for those that have the time to...”[Participant 16]*

The responses above indicate that some managers in NDM could make use of ICT platforms to share their knowledge. These positive responses towards the use of ICT were mostly from the younger generation of managers and the managers responsible for ICT Units.

Some managers felt that ICT could not be an ideal platform for them to share knowledge. However, they were not against the idea of using ICT to share knowledge in their municipalities. The reasons behind the tenantless use of ICT include age, computer literacy and lack of time. Lack of IT systems integration, lack of technical support, and lack of training for familiarisation of IT systems and processes, lead to people’s reluctance to use IT systems (Riege 2005:25). Ngcamu (2012: 136) confirms that, employees’ age and career phases may also affect their knowledge sharing behaviours. This and other reasons, including a lack of integrated project planning and effective management could lead to resistance from public sector employees to share knowledge through ICT platforms (Mawela, Ochara & Twinomurinzi 2017:150). Ardichvili (2008) claimed that lack of technological expertise and possible averse towards using technology could be a major obstacle to knowledge sharing.

In addition, some managers mentioned the use of social media platforms as a suitable means of sharing knowledge. They indicated that the use of their personal gadgets and the fact that they use social media platforms on a regular basis could be more convenient for sharing knowledge. Social media platforms provide new opportunities for organisations to connect employees who can then benefit from relating, through sharing valuable knowledge exchanges (especially the tacit knowledge of employees) (Razmerita, Kirchner & Nielsen 2016:1239). Although the benefits of using social media are acknowledged, mainly as a platform for sharing knowledge, employee's participation on social platforms in NDM is still limited and it is a function of various reasons. In one of the interviews, one employee pointed out that the municipal ICT policy does not permit the use of social media. International Telecommunication Union (ITU) 2010:3) states that some non-adoption of the use of ICTs may be due to security and online privacy concerns. In that light, through the use of social media, employees can easily post negative material to millions of people around the world, thereby causing harm towards the employer's economic interest, and undermining the brand image and reputation (Mushwana & Bezuidenhout 2014:63).

#### 4.4.4.3 Rewards

Six participants responded that recognition by top management is one of the most appreciated rewards for their efforts to share knowledge, and it could make a difference in encouraging them to share knowledge. Five participants responded that monetary incentives or bonuses would encourage them to share knowledge. Three participants indicated that rewards will not necessarily encourage them to share knowledge. Rather a knowledge sharing friendly culture is important.

*"...I would like to be rewarded for sharing my knowledge in a form of incentives..."*

**[Participant 2]**

*"....being rewarded for ones efforts gives pleasure and satisfaction...so rewards would encourage me to share more..."* **[Participant 3]**

*".... small words of recognition from top management for sharing my knowledge could go a long way..."* **[Participant 7]**

*“... rewards in a form of recognition.... ‘Something like employee of the month’, could make me to share more....”***[Participant 9]**

*“...I wouldn’t want to be paid for sharing my knowledge...some credit from my superior is essential to show recognition of one’s efforts for sharing knowledge, even if it’s verbal...”***[Participant 10]**

*“ I don’t think rewards in form of money would be necessary to encourage people to share their knowledge....if the culture says knowledge should be shared to achieve municipality goals .....then most of us would share what we know”.* **[Participant 12]**

*“...incentives would be a great idea...”***[Participant 13]**

*“...I would love to be rewarded in form of cash for sharing my knowledge.”***[Participant 14]**

*“...rewards in form of bonuses would be the one thing that could encourage me to share....”***[Participant 15]**

*“...I have worked hard to be where I am today...so sharing my experience should be taken seriously and be rewarded....it could be a bonus or something...”***[Participant 16]**

*“...money would be welcomed....”***[Participant 17]**

The following responses were the four participants who thought rewards were not necessary for knowledge sharing:

*“...knowledge sharing should be included in our performance contracts so that we are rewarded...”***[Participant 1]**

*“... I don’t think rewards are necessary for me to share my knowledge...I would do it as long as the time and environment permits...”***[Participant 4]**

*“...rewards are not necessary....knowledge sharing should be considered as part of our job...”***[Participant 5]**

*“.... I don’t think we should be rewarded for sharing our knowledge....”***[Participant 11]**

It is clear that rewards in the NDM may contribute to effective knowledge sharing. The respondents indicated that being rewarded for sharing knowledge would mean that their knowledge is acknowledged by the employer. Some participants further indicated that any form of recognition, even if it is not in cash would go a long way in encouraging them to share. Unrewarded behaviours usually end up fading away due to lack of praise and appreciation (Al-Alawi, Yousif & Mohammed 2007:36). Recognising and rewarding employees' efforts, can influence and motivate them to contribute in knowledge sharing practices (Kathiravelu, Mansor & Ramayah 2015:28). It is unrealistic to assume that all employees are willing to easily offer knowledge without considering the possible gains or losses (Alawi et al. 2007:28). Therefore, knowledge sharing can be encouraged through rewards (Sandhu 2010:119).

#### 4.4.4.4 Trust

Eleven participants highlighted that they would only share their knowledge if they trusted the people with whom they share their knowledge. Seven participants did not think trust is a concern for them when sharing knowledge.

*"...I guess one cannot share their knowledge if they don't trust their colleagues...so it says there should be an enabling environment..."* **[Participant 1]**

*"...it's not easy to share your knowledge sometimes because others then use your expertise as their own...so I need to trust the people I'm sharing with before I can freely share my knowledge..."* **[Participant 2]**

*"...I think trust plays a role in encouraging people to share their knowledge...so if employees could be assured that they won't be undermined by sharing what they know, then they would freely share their knowledge..."* **[Participant 4]**

*"...its not easy to just share your knowledge with other people unless you trust them..."* **[Participant 7]**

*"...I think sharing what you know is a sensitive issue...so trust need to be there..."* **[Participant 8]**

*"...sharing ones knowledge is like showing someone your bank balance....I need to trust the person I am sharing that information with...."* **[Participant 9]**

*“....my knowledge is like a valuable asset, which I can only share with those I love and trust....”* **[Participant 12]**

*“.... I can only share my knowledge only with those that I trust...”* **[Participant 13]**

*“....I have a feeling that sharing too much of your knowledge may lead to losing power or recognition...”* **[Participant 14]**

*“...trust for sharing your knowledge is important...”* **[Participant 15]**

*“....there is knowledge that I would never share...I choose to keep it for my own benefit because I don't trust anyone....”* **[Participant 17]**

*“....trust is not a concern for me when sharing what I know....”* **[Participant 3]**

*“...I don't need to trust people to share my knowledge...”* **[Participant 5]**

*“...trust is not a big deal to me when sharing knowledge...”* **[Participant 7]**

*“...for the sake of progress at work, I would share even with strangers...”* **[Participant 10]**

*“...trust is not really a problem for me....”* **[Participant 11]**

*“....I am not afraid of sharing what I know because how they make use of what you teach them depends on individuals ...”* **[Participant 16]**

*“....because I am dedicated to serve the municipality...I would share even when trust is not there...”* **[Participant 18]**

The responses above indicate that trust is a contributing factor for knowledge sharing in NDM. Some managers assume that they may lose power and prominence if they share their knowledge. Ondari- Okwemwa & Smith (2009:36) found that many civil servants still wary about sharing knowledge, because, in their view hoarding knowledge enhance their value and competitiveness. This finding echo Dikotla (2016: 245), who found that the culture of mistrust and knowledge hoarding was existent Limpopo municipalities. He concluded that knowledge sharing could not succeed where there is fear, because people would not contribute in sharing critical information (Dikotla 2016:246). Some participants indicated that they do not have trust concerns when it comes to sharing their knowledge in NDM. This finding confirms Ardichvilli



(2002:11) whose findings shows that, some people view their knowledge as a public asset, belonging not only to them individually, but to the whole organisation. Assem & Pappi (2016: 491) found that some public sector employees believed that sharing their knowledge makes them valuable because they would be consulted when need arises. Amayah (2013:464) also noted that if the knowledge shared is not regarded as sensitive or otherwise important, trust might not be needed for one to be willing to share it.

#### **4.4.5 Knowledge sharing practices in NDM**

This section of the interview sought to establish knowledge sharing practices in NDM. The researcher wanted to establish whether there were existing structures, platforms (physical and computer based) and programmes for knowledge sharing. The researcher also wanted to establish whether these platforms (if existing) were satisfying the role of knowledge sharing in NDM.

##### **4.4.5.1 Existing structures and opportunities for knowledge sharing**

All eighteen participants indicated that their municipalities do not have formal platforms such as the Community of Practice (CoP) and knowledge sharing forums set for knowledge sharing. Six respondents stated that there are service delivery structures existing in the selected municipalities, such as the IDP/LED forum, IDP internal steering committee, Batho-Pele committees. Below are the responses from the participants:

*“.....we do not have formal structures for knowledge sharing in our municipality...what we have is IDP/LED (Integrated Development Planning/Local Economic Development) forums, which consist of political structures, officials and other stakeholders....I think they are the ones that are supposed to be addressing the issue of knowledge sharing...”***[Participant 1]**

*“...there are structures such as the service delivery working groups and internal IDP steering committees, which were established for the purpose of collaborative planning, which I think would have been a suitable platform for knowledge sharing....unfortunately, those structures are now non-functional...”***[Participant 2]**

*“.... the municipality has recently established the Batho-Pele committee, which deals with service delivery issues in the district (NDM).....I do believe that it is going to be an ideal platform for knowledge sharing in our municipality....” [Participant 3]*

*“....as for the community of practice (CoPs)...I have never heard of any existence of such platforms in our municipality....” [Participant 4]*

*“...I think the community of practice in our municipality may be associated with social media platforms....and since social media platforms are not accepted in this municipality.... I don't think there could be any room for such (CoPs)”. [Participant 5]*

*“....there are no structures for knowledge sharing available....” [Participant 7]*

*“...structures are established for service delivery engagements, but they disappear without fulfilling their purpose.... maybe those (structures) could have been ideal for sharing knowledge” [Participant 7]*

*“....there's no existence of knowledge sharing structures...” [Participant 8]*

*“....there is no such knowledge sharing forums or community of practice groups in this municipality existing...” [Participant 9]*

*“....unfortunately, there are no structures for sharing knowledge in the institution...” [Participant 10]*

*“....maybe I might be in lack of some information, but as far as I know...we do not have structures for sharing knowledge in the municipality...” [Participant 11]*

*“....it would have been a great idea to have such structures....but no, there isn't any existing....” [Participant 14]*

The responses above reveal that there are no formal structures/committees or forums for knowledge sharing in NDM. As indicated earlier, some managers cited that there are forums meant to discuss service delivery issues in the six municipalities. However, some of these structures are no longer functional, due to unknown reasons. The participants also indicated that, the structures/forums which are functioning are not formally recognised, as knowledge sharing structures. However, participants argue that such structures could be suitable platforms for knowledge sharing. The reasons behind this finding confirms Mosala-Bryant (2015:193) who found that the structures

that enabled knowledge sharing in the government departments, mainly constitute of different meetings held by executive managers and politicians. Netswera & Phago (2011: 138) found that the problem with the functioning of these committees is that, in most instances, the same people who appear to be proactive and effective are nominated on all the committees, thus, excluding some councillors and managers with less experience in such committees. Mkhize (2015:8) states that if these knowledge sharing structures and forums were available, employees could actively engage each other on important issues or concepts relating to the current situation, which makes it easier to find direct and relevant solutions. For NDM, lack of such forums could be linked to the lack of relevant knowledge on the concept of knowledge sharing in municipalities.

#### **4.4.5.2 The level of forum discussions contributing to the objectives of the organisation**

Six participants lamented that the discussions taking place in the forum meetings did not add much value to the objectives of the organisation (NDM). The discussions were less collaborative, as a result, there was no effective knowledge sharing. The other twelve participants did not comment on this question because they did not have existing structures, forums or committees in their municipalities.

*“...there is limited knowledge sharing happening in the IDP/LED forums in the municipality...the meetings are more of informing to the deputation than being interactive...”***[Participant 1]**

*“...the forums are supposed to be knowledge sharing oriented... where strategic decisions are taken...but in most cases junior officials are made to attend.... they (junior officials) do not have any valuable information from their municipalities.....then in the next meeting there is a new face representing a certain department or a municipality...so they do not really serve the purpose of knowledge sharing...”***[Participant 2]**

*“....the forums are done for compliance....nothing concrete has ever come out of those meetings....”***[Participant 6]**

*“....no serious interaction takes place in these forums....it’s just a straight forward agenda...with junior staff who cannot contribute much for actions to be taken on service delivery matters....” [Participant 8]*

*“...these meetings are normally a one way communication....” [Participant 12]*

*“.....the meetings are attended by irrelevant people...as a result they don’t achieve the goal of taking decisions for service delivery...” [Participant 13]*

From the responses above, it is clear that forum meetings which take place in NDM are not geared to share knowledge and to take effective decisions. Some participants indicated that these meetings are mostly non-interactive, but simply a form of conveying information. This is in line with Ramohlale (2014: 154) who found that forums and meetings held by staff members in the South African Department of Defence were not necessarily structured to share knowledge, but rather share information and clarify instructions, and get progress reports on the projects which they are involved in. Ideally, these are strategic meetings and should be attended by senior managers and political representatives. However, some participants indicated that lack of attendance by intended delegates result in inappropriately discussed and unsettled decisions on service delivery issues.

#### **4.4.5.3 Availability of strategies and programmes to support knowledge sharing**

Some participants indicated that there are programmes available, and they could be utilised to support knowledge sharing to some extent. These included internship programs, induction and newsletters.

##### **4.4.5.3.1 Mentoring**

Eleven participants revealed that there are no mentoring programs in their municipalities. Seven participants indicated that there are mentoring programs, such as internship programmes in their municipalities. Three participants indicated that new employees still going through inductions in their municipalities.

*“...we do have internship programmes that are funded by LGSETA (Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority), and some from the finance department are funded by National Treasury....the programmes normally last for two years....so I think*

*those (internship program) could form part of the knowledge sharing platform.*  
**[Participant 1]**

*"...there are internships for finance department only...."* **[Participant 2]**

*"....we have interns for Finance and Development, Planning Units, IT and HR (human resource management) ...."* **[Participant 3]**

*"... we do have interns in the municipality..."* **[Participant 4]**

*"...finance department is blessed...they have interns..."* **[Participant 5]**

*"...we normally have interns at finance...."* **[Participant 16]**

*"...the municipality does have interns for a contract of 1-2 years..."* **[Participant 17]**

*"...the municipality conducts induction sessions for newly appointed personnel, as a means of knowledge sharing...."* **[Participant 1]**

*"...we conduct inductions in the municipality, more especially for the emergency services staff to keep them abreast with information....."* **[Participant 2]**

*"...It's difficult to say that we do conduct inductions for newly employed personnel because it's not consistent...."* **[Participant 6]**

*"...there are no mentoring programmes present in the municipality..."* **[Participant 7]**

*"...there isn't any existing..."* **[Participant 8]**

*"...we would have loved to have such programmes, unfortunately due to some circumstances we do not have...."* **[Participant 9]**

*"....it's a pity this municipality has not yet introduced any mentoring programmes..."*  
**[Participant 10]**

*"...No mentoring programmes available in the municipality..."* **[Participant 11]**

*"...there are pressing issues which have prevented us from introducing such initiatives..."* **[Participant 12]**

*"...unfortunately, no such programs exist..."* **[Participant 13]**

*“...it is really heart breaking to see this municipality failing to institute these programmes...”* **[Participant 14]**

*“...it would have been interesting to be part of the team that facilitate mentoring programmes...sadly; we don't have any existing...”* **[Participant 15]**

*“....I'm not sure if management has ever considered mentoring programmes in this municipality...but I guess it's something to consider...”* **[Participant 18]**

From the responses above, it is clear that NDM is lacking in terms of mentorship and coaching programs. Some participants revealed that there are extant programs, such as mentoring and induction programs in their municipalities. However, they are challenges in the sustenance of such programs. According to Wamulinda & Ngulube (2011:3) mentorship is one of the ways in which knowledge can be shared in an organisation. However, very few organisations have realised the value and importance of using mentoring as another tool for sharing and transferring knowledge between various levels of an organisation and experience (Mavuso 2007:67). Some participants indicated that there are induction programmes in their municipalities. However, the induction programmes are not consistent. The reasons behind the failures of induction programmes in NDM are not clear. Mlindazwe (2010:98) found that lack of policy and personnel designated to conduct induction in an organisation could lead to a neglected induction programme. Certainly, an effective induction programme reduces adjustment problems of new public servants by creating a sense of security, confidence and belonging in them (Matsego 2007:69).

#### 4.4.5.3.2 Storytelling

All eighteen participants revealed that there were no storytelling activities in their municipalities. Sixteen participants responded with a 'no' answer. Two participants responded as follows:

*“.... I have been in this municipality for over ten years.... there has never been a story telling initiative, ever since I started working here...”* **[Participant 9]**

*“.... even if we have a storytelling program...I do not think it would be taken seriously in this municipality.....”* **[Participant 15]**

Janus (2016: 91) found that, storytelling could be used as a knowledge-sharing tool for proper handing over of duties by retiring staff to the incoming personnel. Storytelling is certainly one of the ways of sharing tacit knowledge for others to use and refer to (Mamabolo 2014:50). Socialising in a formal or informal way provides opportunities for stories to be told, as people relate their experiences, and people are encouraged to share knowledge through storytelling (Mitchel 2011:639). Further, Savita, Hazwani & Kalid (2011: 263) found stories told by experts about their experience on the job or new methods and techniques that they have used in solving a problem. However, NDM has not yet realised the benefits of using storytelling as a means for knowledge sharing. It is clear that the lack of storytelling as a strategy for knowledge sharing in NDM decreases the channels for tacit knowledge to flow towards other staff members for them to gain more knowledge.

#### 4.4.5.3.3 Newsletter

Three participants indicated that there are newsletters published on a regular basis in their municipalities. Three participants indicated that they have newsletters, but there are challenges. Twelve participants indicated that they do not have a newsletter in their municipalities. Two participants indicated that their municipality used to have a newsletter but due to certain circumstances, it was discontinued.

*“...Yes we do have a newsletter that is published quarterly.... to a certain extend I think it provides a platform for knowledge sharing...”* **[Participant 6]**

*“...the municipality has a newsletter which is published regularly...”* **[Participant 9]**

*“.... I can't say we do have one, because it was only launched....and I personally have never seen any copy of its publication ever since....”* **[Participant 11]**

*“...we do have one, but with challenges...”* **[Participant 1]**

*“...the municipality have a newsletter...though it is not published regularly...”* **[Participant 2]**

*“...we do have one...but we are still trying to find our foot with it....”* **[Participant 3]**

*“...there's no newsletter in this municipality, due to budgetary constraints...”* **[Participant 4]**

*“...no newsletter existing in the municipality...”* [Participant 5]

*“...we do not have a newsletter here (municipality)...”* [Participant 7]

*“...we don’t have the budget for a newsletter...so we don’t have one...”* [Participant 8]

*“...it would have been a pleasure to have...unfortunately we do not have the financial muscle...”* [Participant 10]

*“...the municipality does not have at the moment, but we are working on it...”* [Participant 12]

*“...due to financial circumstances...we don’t have...”* [Participant 15]

*“...not as yet, but in the process of developing one...”* [Participant 16]

*“...it is still in the developing stages...at the moment none...”* [Participant 17]

*“...we used to have a newsletter, however due to certain problems.... it stopped...”* [Participant 13]

*“...the municipality had some challenges with the newsletter, so it couldn’t continue...”* [Participant 15]

*“...certain circumstances resulted in the newsletter being discontinued...”* [Participant 18]

From the responses above, there is an indication that most municipalities in NDM do not have a newsletter. Lack of monetary budget towards newsletters, was among the reasons behind the failure of newsletters across the municipalities. Some participants indicated that newsletters were existing in their municipalities, however, there are constraints. They also mentioned that newsletters are meant to provide information to the public. Dikotla (2016:103) noted that municipalities publish newsletters with the intent to highlight the municipal achievements and activities such as mayoral events. It is not clear whether these existing newsletters serve the purpose of knowledge sharing in NDM.



#### 4.4.5.4 Ways to share knowledge amongst staff members

Eleven participants indicated that there were no formal ways used in their municipalities to share knowledge with their staff members. To a certain extent staff meetings serve as a platform for knowledge sharing. Seven participants pointed out that emails, WhatsApp groups and instant messaging are used for sharing knowledge.

*“....we do not have a specific way as a municipality....but within my department we use staff meetings, held fortnightly to discuss progress on projects and other staff activities.....in that way we share knowledge...”* **[Participant 1]**

*“...we use staff meetings at least once a month to discuss progress on our work...”* **[Participant 5]**

*“...usually it is during staff meetings and we also use emails...”* **[Participant 6]**

*“...there’s no formalised way of sharing our knowledge...but I guess it just happens as we interact with each other as we do our work...”* **[Participant 7]**

*“...it’s mostly during staff meetings...though sometimes we struggle to find time to sit due to a lot of management commitments...”* **[Participant 8]**

*“...we commonly use meetings...”* **[Participant 9]**

*“....it’s not always possible to physically interact with staff members...so we try to use instant messaging and a WhatsApp group... we post updates and information for colleagues to be informed about any developments in the department....”* **[Participant 2]**

*“...we do not have a prescribed channel for knowledge sharing....if it (knowledge sharing) does happen....it’s when they (staff members) interact with each other on informal bases...”* **[Participant 3]**

*“...we use meetings and WhatsApp messaging mostly...and emails too...”* **[Participant 4]**

*“.....normally we use emails to communicate and share knowledge....”* **[Participant 10]**

*“In terms of sharing with the other municipalities in the district (NDM)....we only use emails and telephones to communicate and share knowledge....”***[Participant 11]**

*“....at a small scale....workshops are organised to discuss and review policies, new systems....like recently we were introduced to the new financial system, called MSCOA, a workshop was used to share such knowledge....”***[Participant 12]**

*“....presentations are also used for sharing in the municipality....when I am asked to make a presentation during a meeting.....but I only share not because I want to...but because I have to.....”***[Participant 13]**

*“....meetings to discuss progress on departmental activities....”***[Participant 14]**

*“....due to lack of time to meet colleagues...we use emails to share information...”***[Participant 15]**

*“...staff meetings are used at a smaller scale...but mostly we use WhatsApp groups...”***[Participant 16]**

*“...we use staff meetings...but recently the use of WhatsApp groups is common...though others are not on WhatsApp...”***[Participant 17]**

*“...for convenience we use WhatsApp groups though it is not a formally recognised method by the municipality...ideally we are supposed to use meetings and emails...”***[Participant 18]**

The responses above show that there it shows that there are no formal systems for knowledge sharing. However, the most commonly used channels for exchanging technical information in NDM are staff meetings, emails, instant messaging, intranets, and WhatsApp groups. Workshops are used to share information at a small scale. Ramohlale (2014: 155) confirms the finding when he discovered that the day- to- day knowledge sharing activities are informal, yet, default means of knowledge-sharing, which however, perform business functions. In addition, knowledge acquired during job interactions is personal information and acquiring it depends on the effort put by the person who needs it (Badimo 2014:3463). Nonaka (1994:24) stated that during day-to-day interactions, various forms of tacit knowledge brought in by individual members is shared and transferred through co-experience to form common understanding.

#### **4.4.5.5 Existing policies for sharing/non-sharing of knowledge in the organisation**

All eighteen participants indicated that there are no extant policies for knowledge sharing in the municipalities' studied. Below are the responses:

*"...there is no policy on knowledge sharing in this municipality..."* **[Participant 1]**

*"....I guess if there was a policy on knowledge sharing; the culture would be encouraging us to share...."* **[Participant 2]**

*"....we don't have one existing...maybe in future...."* **[Participant 3]**

*"...at this stage the municipality does not have an existing policy for sharing knowledge..."* **[Participant 4]**

*"....currently we don't have any policy on knowledge sharing...."* **[Participant 5]**

*"....there's is nothing that guides knowledge sharing in the municipality..."* **[Participant 6]**

*"...we do not have a policy at the present moment..."* **[Participant 7]**

*"...a policy would be of great assistance (on KS)...unfortunately, we don't have..."* **[Participant 8]**

*"...a policy (on KS) could be a good guide...however; we currently do not have..."* **[Participant 9]**

*"...there's no policy on knowledge sharing in the municipality..."* **[Participant 10]**

*"....no it's (KS policy) not existing...."* **[Participant 11]**

*"....there are none existent in this municipality..."* **[Participant 12]**

*"...we do not have a policy in the municipality..."* **[Participant 13]**

*"...we lack policies to guide us with the knowledge sharing process."* **[Participant 14]**

*"...it is difficult to be guided when there is no policy to refer to..."* **[Participant 15]**

*"...I think since the knowledge sharing idea is not recognised in the municipality...there wouldn't be a policy for it..."* **[Participant 16]**

*“There is no policy at all for sharing knowledge...” [Participant 17]*

*“Knowledge sharing policy does not exist in the municipality...” [Participant 18]*

The responses are an indication that NDM does not have policies to guide knowledge sharing. Ramohlale (2014: 151) asserts that lack of knowledge sharing policy makes the institutionalising of knowledge sharing impossible and non-existent. Ncoyini (2013:581) emphasises that knowledge sharing activities need to be directed towards real efforts that are based on clear organisational strategies. As such, the lack of knowledge sharing policies in NDM indicates that knowledge sharing is not regarded as one of the important concerns for NDM.

#### **4.4.5.6 ICT Infrastructure for knowledge sharing**

Participants were asked whether they thought NDM municipalities had adequate infrastructure to support on knowledge sharing. The responses from all the eighteen participants revealed that the municipalities provide basic ICT infrastructure. Some of them indicated that they have knowledge sharing platforms such as computers, email facilities, websites, intranets, document management systems, to name a few. This is what some of the respondents had to say:

*“...we all have computers to work on, with basic internet connection...” [Participant 1]*

*“...the municipality has a computer and email facility...” [Participant 2]*

*“... staff members are provided with computers...” [Participant 3]*

*“.... the municipality have technology infrastructure .... we have the intranet, website and the email platforms... social media, like your Facebook and others are not allowed....” [Participant 4]*

*“...there is a website in the municipality...though it’s not regularly updated...” [Participant 5]*

*“...Our municipality has an intranet where most of the information is posted...for example, if there is a new policy or a new system in the municipality, information is posted there (intranet) for everyone to see, make comments and ask questions...” [Participant 6]*

*“...we do have a Facebook page...but we can only comment on what has been posted by the administrator not the other way round...” [Participant 7]*

*“...there is a website, intranet and emails which could be used to share...” [Participant 8]*

*“...the municipality has the basic ICT infrastructure...though it has its own challenges...” [Participant 9]*

*“...an email and the website...” [Participant 10]*

*“... though we do not have everything in regard to ICT tools...but yes we do have the basics....such as a computer” [Participant 11]*

*“... we also have a records management system....it supports electronic storage and access of information...in that way knowledge can be shared...” [Participant 12]*

*“...there is a records management system where employees are allowed to search and retrieve documents they need....” [Participant 13]*

*“...the municipality also has an instant messaging facility, to cover even employees who are not normally in the office....however, it's a one-way situation because they(official outside the office) have to use their own airtime to send information if they need to...” [Participant 14]*

*“...We have a website, intranet, emails, and instant messaging...” [Participant 15]*

*“...we don't have most of the systems we would desire to have in regard to ICT for the flow of information, but we do have the basics for now...email, Facebook page, collaborator for records management...” [Participant 16]*

*“The municipality provide us with computers with email access, internet and the telephone to communicate with other colleagues...” [Participant 17]*

*“...The basic tools (ICT) are there... Computers, telephones, fax and so on....” [Participant 18]*

The responses provided are an indication of the availability of basic ICT infrastructure for sharing knowledge in NDM. The basic ICT infrastructure include a computer, email, internet, records management system, telephones and cell phones. ICT enables rapid

searching, accessing and retrieving of information, and can support teamwork and communication among organisational members (Nkomanyane 2010:55). However, participants revealed that the ICT infrastructure that they have, do not effectively support knowledge sharing due to some limitations. These limitations are discussed in detail under challenges for knowledge sharing in NDM. Ramohlale (2014: 137) stated that public sector employees regarded ICT channels for knowledge sharing as non-existent, due to its inability to meet employee's expectations and demands. Effective knowledge sharing depends on the access level people sharing their knowledge have to computer facilities used throughout the organisation (Dikotla 2016: 226).

#### **4.4.7 Challenges for knowledge sharing in NDM**

This section of the interview established the level of knowledge sharing challenges existing in the local municipalities studied. In order to make sound recommendations for the study, it was necessary for the researcher to establish the challenges related to effective knowledge sharing in NDM. All eighteen participants responded on one or more areas, where they felt there was a serious challenge from the question. Therefore, responses are more than eighteen. The results indicate that there are challenges relating to culture, structure and rewards. Issues of trust and ICT were mentioned as some of the contributing factors towards effective knowledge sharing.

##### **E 4.4.7.1 Culture, structure and rewards**

Seven respondents revealed that the culture in most municipalities did not support knowledge sharing. Senior staff do not share their knowledge. However, knowledge sharing to support junior staff cannot happen habitually without learning from senior managers. The following were some of the responses:

*".... the culture of the municipality does not encourage knowledge sharing to take place...there are no formal platforms for us to share what we know..."* **[Participant 1]**

*"...I don't see the junior staff sharing knowledge if we as managers are not doing it effectively, amongst ourselves and with our staff members in our departments...."* **[Participant 3]**

*"...each department is doing its own activities without the others knowing and yet we are in one body...it shows lack of knowledge sharing culture ...."* **[Participant 4]**

*“...one is aware of events/activities from other departments when feedback is given during management meetings...there no coordination at all...”* **[Participant 8]**

*“The environment in the municipality does not recognise individual knowledge, acquired through experience....and maybe the recognition of one’s academic achievements, even when they (the municipality) is funding for further education...I cannot just share knowledge because it’s my own asset that I don’t just want to part with easily...”* **[Participant 11]**

*“...the reporting structure is too tight and it makes it difficult to pass on information, more especially from down- up...I think that is where the knowledge sharing process becomes a challenge...”* **[Participant 12]**

*“...our political heads have the impression that they have to instruct the admin office on how processes should be undertaken, and not in an interactive manner.... this behaviour sort of blocks the opportunity for us to share ideas and learn from each other.... service delivery is then affected....”* **[Participant 17]**

Three (3) participants highlighted that there are also challenges concerning knowledge sharing between the district municipality and its local municipalities.

*“.... there is no serious coordination in regard to knowledge sharing amongst the local municipalities in the district.... each one of us is doing their own thing, and yet we are supposed to be one machine....”* **[Participant 2]**

*“... our (local municipalities) IDP plans are not linked to each other and the district (NDM)...this is because we lack the sense of knowledge sharing and coordination....”* **[Participant 4]**

*“....there are no effective initiatives to share knowledge amongst the municipalities...so we are just lagging behind. We are not working together at all....”* **[Participant 7]**

Responses above indicate that there are challenges regarding the culture and structure that does not support knowledge sharing in NDM. Lack of a supporting culture and structure has resulted in the dearth of coordination between departments and local municipalities. The reason for this behaviour could be driven by the nature of government, which Cong *et al.* (2007: 254) states that in government, there are

many functional silos created by large and bureaucratic organisations, operating on “need to know” basis.

#### 4.4.7.2 Trust

Four participants mentioned the issue of trust for effective knowledge sharing. The responses are as follows:

*“.... most people here (municipality) tend to hold on to what they know because they do not want to lose recognition.... I think this affects service delivery because the knowledgeable person for instance, has to be called from home at times to sort certain problems here at work.....if the person could trust the people he/she works with, I think they (knowledgeable person) would share.”* **[Participant 9]**

*“...We don't trust each other; hence we do not share our knowledge....”* **[Participant 10]**

*“...most people are still holding on to what they know because they lack trust...”* **[Participant 13]**

*“...the issue with knowledge sharing is that some employees are reluctant to share because they don't want to lose their prominence status so say...”* **[Participant 14]**

Riege (2005:23) noted that lack of trust in people arises because they may misuse knowledge or take unjust credit for it is common in the public sector. In this study, we find a similar notion, where trust is one of the major issues which prevent people from sharing knowledge in NDM. This finding is also consistent with Boateng and Agyemang (2016:490) who found lack of trust as a barrier to knowledge sharing among public sector workers in Ghana.

#### 4.4.7.3 ICT

Eleven participants mentioned some challenges pertaining to knowledge sharing and ICT in the NDM. Their responses are as follows:

*“.... our staff have a tendency to resist using technology to share knowledge because they are used to certain ways of doing things.... where technology systems are introduced, they feel like you (manager/institution) are driving them to another direction that they are not comfortable with...”* **[Participant 3]**



*“...employees tend to reject ICT tools that are implemented without consultation and testing.... if they (staff) find it difficult to use, more especially the older generation.... they avoid using it...we have had cases where people have resigned, due to resistance to change....”***[Participant 5]**

*“...the website that the municipality is having does not contain updated information.... I can’t say it is a reliable tool for knowledge sharing...”***[Participant 6]**

*“....80% of the time we do not have network connection, and if that happens, we can’t send e-mails and only rely on telephones to communicate....so it makes it difficult to share knowledge with colleagues...”***[Participant 7]**

*“....network connection is a huge challenge in the municipality....”***[Participant 9]**

*“...Internet connection is only here at the head offices of the municipality.... otherwise the other four satellite offices of the municipality do not have connections.... They (satellite offices) are still using...manual systems to communicate, and so there is limited knowledge sharing happening between us (head office staff) and them (satellite offices staff) and yet we are one municipality.”***[Participant 10]**

*“...our records management system is not user friendly...so sometimes one becomes lazy to look for information...”***[Participant 11]**

*“...I struggle to get information from the records system...”***[Participant 12]**

*“... it is not easy to find information from our document management system...”***[Participant 13]**

*“...as mentioned earlier, there are other employees who are computer illiterate like myself....hence they won’t share knowledge using ICT platforms...”***[Participant 14]**

*“...using computer is a challenge for me...so I guess a lot of others in the municipality might have a similar problem...”***[Participant 15]**

*“....social media is not allowed in the municipality...”***[Participant 16]**

*“...the ICT policy in this municipality prohibits the use of social media...so we are discouraged to share our knowledge...”***[Participant 17]**

*“...we do not have support to use social media to share our knowledge...if we do it at our own cost....”***[Participant 18]**

Based on the responses above, NDM managers have challenges regarding the use of ICT for knowledge sharing. Chiefly because of the internet connection challenges in rural municipalities, knowledge sharing is not effective. Bopape (2010:132), confirms that people from rural communities are disadvantaged in terms of information technology and Internet access, because most rural villages lack technological infrastructure. According to these respondents, lack of advanced computer skills negatively affects the level of willingness to share knowledge more, especially from the senior staff members of NDM. The main reason for non-utilisation of such systems is unfamiliarity with web technologies (Bopape 2010: 139). Davenport (1994:128) noted that in most cases workers do not use knowledge sharing technologies and tools simply because they are not sure how they work or do not understand what they are expected to practice. Respondents also indicated that the websites and intranets do not comprise of updated information. Lastly, the use of social media platforms in some municipalities is limited; hence, managers are discouraged to share knowledge. The restriction of the use of social media may be due to lack of control (Mosala-Bryant 2015:236).

#### 4.4.7.4 Programmes for knowledge sharing

Seven participants specified that current programmes such as internship and induction programmes are not consistent and sustainable. The following is what participants had to say:

*“.... the internship programmes that we have in the municipality are not sustainable, due to the fact that we are unable to absorb the learners as permanent employees due to budgetary constraints....it is like we are building a house for someone else to occupy..... so it doesn't serve the purpose of knowledge sharing.”* **[Participant 4]**

*“...Interns leave the institution once their contracts end because we fail to employ them permanently...”* **[Participant 6]**

*“...sometimes we consider ourselves lucky when we are able to provide permanent employment to the interns...in most cases, we have to let them go...” [Participant 9]*

*“... it is difficult to retain our interns due to financial constraints...” [Participant 10]*

*“...the induction programme that we have in the municipality is not consistent...some new employees are inducted as soon as they come in.....some are inducted four months into the job....” [Participant 11]*

*“...induction is not always conducted...so it’s just a challenge...” [Participant 16]*

*“...I think we lack proper planning for our induction programmes to be consistent...in some instances personnel is not available to conduct such (induction) sessions....” [Participant 17]*

The responses above indicate that the programmes for knowledge sharing such as mentoring and inductions are not regular and sustainable in NDM. Maupa (2015:78) asserts that due to the financial burden that comes with permanent employment, one of the specific conditions for internship programs in municipalities is none guarantee of permanent employment after the programme. Therefore, the reasons for unsustainable internship programs in NDM may be mainly due to lack of funding towards permanent employment. Lack of proper planning and staff compliment leads to an ill-conduct and process of induction programmes.

#### **4.4.9 Suggestions on how to improve knowledge sharing in NDM**

Participants suggested that, in order for NDM to improve, development of policies was required, a fully functional records management system, a unit responsible for knowledge storage and sharing is necessary; and the ICT systems need to be improved to fully support knowledge sharing.

*“...development of policies to deal with knowledge sharing concerns will definitely be a solution to improve the culture of knowledge sharing in this municipality...” [Participant 1]*

*“...an awareness for knowledge sharing should be conducted from executive management downwards to popularise the benefits of knowledge sharing...” [Participant 2]*

*“...managers should have it (knowledge sharing) in their performance plans that they should conduct knowledge sharing activities in their departments...”* **[Participant 3]**

*“...establishment of a unit in the municipality that will be responsible for knowledge storage and sharing....it could somehow solve the challenges of knowledge sharing...”* **[Participant 4]**

*“...a unit that could be responsible for coordinating knowledge sharing activities could be of great advantage....”* **[Participant 5]**

*“...we need a well-functioning records management system, which should cater for storing and disseminating our knowledge needs...”* **[Participant 6]**

*“...the existing forums such as the IDP/LED should be redesigned to allow effective knowledge sharing to take place...”* **[Participant 7]**

*“...our ICT systems should be improved so that they are able to facilitate knowledge sharing effectively...”* **[Participant 8]**

*“...training and encouragement to share knowledge should be made clear in the municipal day to day dealings...”* **[Participant 9]**

*“...the use of social media platforms should be included in knowledge sharing policies...”* **[Participant 10]**

*“...a district wide guideline for knowledge sharing is required...then local guides can be developed...”* **[Participant 11]**

*“...we need to somehow develop a culture for knowledge sharing in the municipality...”* **[Participant 12]**

*“...a culture that supports knowledge sharing programmes could assist us in achieving our service delivery mandate....”* **[Participant 13]**

*“...We need to try and get educated regarding this knowledge sharing concept....it is clear that it can change the way we do things in the municipality...”* **[Participant 14]**

*“...I am not exactly sure what I can suggest...but I think we need to start by adopting the idea of knowledge sharing in our municipality...”* **[Participant 15]**

*“... Let us develop (knowledge sharing) policies to guide us...” [Participant 16]*

*“...we will have to start by selling the idea (knowledge sharing) to top management...then see what happens...” [Participant 17]*

The above responses indicate that participants perceive that a culture that supports knowledge sharing could make a difference in enhancing knowledge sharing processes. They believe that developing knowledge sharing policies/strategies could encourage employees in NDM to actively share knowledge. There is also an indication that shows that through the correct and reliable ICT platforms, knowledge sharing practices in NDM can improve.

#### **4.5 Summary of Chapter four**

This chapter presented findings of the study. These findings determined whether the objectives of the study were achieved or not. The following findings emanated from the study: most respondents are not aware of the concept of knowledge sharing in local government; those that are aware of the concept of knowledge sharing acknowledge the benefits it has towards improving service delivery. Respondents agree that the culture of knowledge sharing is not promoted in NDM, because there are narrow formal channels that are available for knowledge sharing. The ICT channels available for knowledge sharing require some improvements for the processes of knowledge. These improvements include the availability of reliable information on websites, internet connections, well-functioning records management system and improved extant structures to facilitate knowledge sharing. The next chapter will discuss the conclusion and recommendations for the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a summary of the findings. It also provides conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study. The aim of the project was to conduct an investigation knowledge sharing in Nkangala District Municipality (NDM) of Mpumalanga, South Africa. As discussed in chapter one, the objective of the study was to find answers on the following questions:

- What is the perception of knowledge sharing in NDM?
- What are the knowledge sharing practices in NDM?
- What are the challenges concerning knowledge sharing practices in NDM?

### **5.2 Summary of major findings**

This section presents the summary of the findings which emanated from the study. The summary presentation is centred on the objectives of the study. The following finding were noted:

#### **5.2.1 Level of perception of knowledge sharing in NDM**

Knowledge sharing is not yet a popular concept among managers in NDM. Participants had a low understanding of the concept. Their responses were based on assumptions of what the concept entails. However, they had a positive perspective over the concept, highlighting that effective knowledge sharing has a potential to improve service delivery in NDM. NDM managers also proved to have tacit knowledge, acquired through work experience and the different type of duties that they do. This tacit knowledge is necessary for the process of knowledge sharing, and to improve efficiency in the NDM. In addition, managers in NDM can be encouraged to share knowledge, by a culture, structure, ICT infrastructure, trust and rewards system that supports knowledge sharing.

#### **5.2.2 Knowledge sharing practices in NDM**

There are no extant formal knowledge sharing strategies, such as mentoring, structures and ICT systems for knowledge sharing NDM. Two of the local

municipalities and the district municipality have internship programmes in certain departments, such as the finance, planning and administration Units. Knowledge sharing practices also take place informally during staff meetings, social interactions and through cell phones. More so, NDM has basic ICT infrastructure, such as computers, access to e-mail, and internet available, which could be used for knowledge sharing.

### **5.2.3 Challenges for knowledge sharing**

Organisational culture in NDM does not support knowledge sharing, due to lack or little understanding of the concept. There are no policies and strategies in place to guide knowledge sharing practices. Lack of such policies have resulted in the unsustainable programmes for knowledge sharing, such as inductions and internships. There is also a tendency of knowledge hoarding, among managers. It emerged that they prefer to be rewarded for sharing what they know. Rewards would indicate a sign of recognising and acknowledging one's knowledge; hence encourage them to participate in knowledge sharing activities.

Lack of advanced ICT skills has resulted in NDM managers', reluctance towards utilising ICT facilities when communicating work related information. Due to lack of technological infrastructure and internet connections, especially in rural municipalities, some managers have been discouraged to connect with other colleagues, hence discouraged to share knowledge. Information on websites and intranets is not updated on a regular basis, and it hinders the flow of knowledge in NDM.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

This section presents recommendations of the study. These recommendations were formulated from the findings of the study. Expectations are that these findings will assist NDM to improve its knowledge sharing practices, for efficient in NDM service delivery processes.

### **5.3.1 Recommendations to improve the Level of understanding of knowledge sharing in NDM**

The study recommends that NDM should adopt the knowledge sharing concept. This could be achieved by establishing a section or committee, which will deal with knowledge sharing. Gaffoor & Cloete (2010:5), suggest that there is a need to clarify

the benefits of knowledge sharing and the role that management hold to encourage a change in their approach to dealing with information and knowledge to executive management. The knowledge sharing section will also ensure that knowledge sharing awareness is conducted to all the other managers in the district as well as the local municipalities. Benchmarking with other municipalities can be the first step towards establishing the knowledge sharing section. Municipalities such as the eThekweni metropolitan, City of Johannesburg and City of Tshwane have existing KM Units. The role of these units is to facilitate knowledge sharing initiatives. The function of KM units in municipalities include institutionalising and mainstreaming KM practices, such as knowledge sharing within the municipal's political and executive leadership, departments and municipal-owned entities (SALGA 2015:19).

SALGA further promotes the sharing of best practices within the South African Municipalities. As such, SALGA (2013:6) encourages municipalities to introduce the sharing of best practices initiatives, in order to benefit from the opportunities of acquiring and sharing knowledge on what works and continue learning about how to improve efficiency. NDM is comprised of one of the best performing municipalities in the country, namely Steve Tshwete Municipality. Hence, the study recommends NDM to consider benchmarking with Steve Tshwete and other municipalities, as part of knowledge sharing initiatives. Badimo (2014:3462) suggests that for organisations to create value, they need to apply knowledge to their services by various means, such as repackaging available knowledge, training employees to think creatively, and utilising employees' understanding of the company's processes.

### **5.3.2 Recommendations to improve knowledge sharing practices in NDM**

The study recommends that NDM should adopt a knowledge sharing culture. This can be achieved through the recognition and acknowledging the importance of knowledge sharing, through developing policies and strategies. The study supports the view noted by Ncoyini (2013:582) who suggested that knowledge sharing policies and strategies must be developed and aligned to organisational plans, to ensure that top management creates and shares a vision on knowledge sharing. Schutte & Barkhuizen (2013:139) also acknowledges the importance of aligning knowledge sharing initiatives with the local government. As such, to improve service delivery performance, knowledge sharing strategies should be aligned with IDP, to enhance collaboration with the six local municipalities. The policies should also cater for issues



such as the rewards system, bureaucratic structures, trust and ICT. Among the issues of concern, a strategy will focus on putting in place mechanisms that can help in moving from tacit to explicit knowledge and focus on projects that allow effective knowledge transfer to facilitate succession planning (SALGA 2015:19).

Dikotla (2016:281) recommends that a culture of knowledge sharing in municipalities may be sustained by introducing a rewarding system for employees engaging in knowledge sharing. Flexible and open organisational structures that facilitate transparent knowledge flow, processes that provide a continuous learning culture could lead to successful knowledge sharing initiatives (Riege 2005:31). Therefore, the study recommends that, NDM municipal managers should review the reporting structures, in order to promote the flow of knowledge from top management, managers, middle managers and the rest of the staff. This recommendation relates with Ncoyini & Cilliers (2016: 7) who recommends that, local government organisational structures must be flexible enough to increase distribution of knowledge and cooperation from traditional borders of the organisation towards knowledge creative borders.

Reinforcing trust between co-workers through occasionally arranging social events and outdoor discussions, could help managers overcome work stress as they build informal friendships (Alawi 2007:37). As such, NDM top management should consider building more opportunities for managers to interact among themselves formally and informally, to encourage knowledge sharing. The study further recommends the establishment of knowledge sharing structures, such as the community of practice (CoP). Mphahlele (2010:111) states that CoP could assist in discouraging working in silos, enabling employees to identify each other and share best practices on a more frequent and manageable basis.

### **5.3.3 Recommendations to address the challenges for knowledge sharing in NDM**

The researcher asserts that some of the knowledge sharing challenges raised from the main findings can be addressed in line with the recommendations in 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 above. These include lack of culture, structure, rewards, trust and the lack of understanding on knowledge sharing concepts by management. As indicated in the

preceding discussions, the establishment of a knowledge sharing section will ensure that knowledge-sharing initiatives are considered by top management. The development of policies and strategies will guide the knowledge sharing activities of NDM. It will further monitor the coordination of knowledge sharing activities within the local municipalities of NDM.

In a bid to address the challenges that emanated from the study regarding ICT, the recommendation is that, NDM should upgrade the existing ICT infrastructure and internet connections to allow online knowledge sharing activities to take place. This recommendation confirms Underwood & Smit (2012:13) who endorse that ICT tools and processes, including social media, should be harnessed by local government, to promote interpersonal communication, knowledge collaboration and sharing within an organisation's firewall as well as between the organisation and its stakeholders where applicable. NDM should develop a policy on ICT, to channel matters such as the use of social media, the internet and other aspects relating to the use of ICT for knowledge sharing. Training of staff on the use of ICT will play a role in minimising the poor usage of ICT tools by managers for knowledge sharing, due to lack of advanced ICT skills. Chawula (2010:825) suggests that better training and education will help managers to identify knowledge gaps and reduce resistance to change. Training will also equip employees with skills that foster innovation, creativity and knowledge sharing (Ncoyini 2016:582).

The study further recommends that NDM should consider introducing job rotation as a mentoring programme. This programme could assist in facilitating knowledge sharing processes, while a solution for absorbing the interns for permanent employment is sourced. Mentoring development is a tangible approach to demonstrate the value of employees, which ascertains a future in the organisation and ensures that the organisation retains the best employees (Bessick & Naicker 2013:4). As such, the study emphasises the use of mentoring as an effective tool for knowledge sharing. NDM should also consider appointment of personnel designated to conduct induction programmes. The dedicated staff will ensure that induction programmes are introduced and sustainable in NDM.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for future research**

This study focused on NDM managers, hence suggestions are that, an additional study should be conducted, to explore knowledge sharing practices in the lower level staff of NDM. The study should employ a quantitative survey research design. It should be designed to establish some of the factors that motivate and discourage employees to share knowledge. Nowadays, most government organisations are using ICT to conduct most of their business. It would be interesting to discover the level of perceptions towards the use of ICT for knowledge sharing in NDM. A comparison of this study and the suggested research could provide a clear picture of knowledge sharing activities in NDM. It could also contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of KM, especially in local government.

#### **5.5 Final conclusion**

The purpose of the study was to investigate knowledge sharing practices in NDM and establish strategies in which these knowledge sharing practices could be improved. The concept of knowledge sharing in NDM is indefinite, which poses challenges on the existence of formal platforms, such as culture and ICT systems which supports knowledge sharing. Therefore, NDM knowledge sharing practices need to be enhanced in order to improve service delivery performance. The researcher recommends that NDM should consider moving towards the adoption of knowledge sharing as a formal platform to drive service delivery processes.

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## **Appendix 1 – Informed Consent Form**

University of South Africa

### **INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT**

Name: Lungile Makhanya

Programme: Master's in information science

Research Study: Knowledge sharing in Nkangala District Municipality

Dear .....,

I am a post-graduate student at the University of South Africa. My contact information and that of my academic supervisor who is presiding over this study are provided below.

I am investigating knowledge sharing practices in a local government context i.e. in Nkangala District Municipality. I am interested in learning what your views, opinions, interpretations and attitudes are on the topic, based on your organisational experience and individual real-life experience. My aim is to gather information on the above mentioned topic using qualitative research processes.

I am therefore requesting for your consent to participate in my research by answering a series of interview questions. The interview will be recorded for transcription purposes, subject to your consent. The interview period will be a minimum of 60 minutes to a maximum of 90 minutes, at a date, time, and venue, suitable to your availability and convenience.

Please understand that your participation in this research is voluntary, and that you can terminate your participation at any time during the course of the research. Feel free to skip any particular question you find uncomfortable responding to, in the process

You also have the right to ask me to exclude any information you provide for the study.

The information obtained from the interview is confidential, and no individuals or organisations will be identified without their written consent. Any information that could reveal your identity or that of your organisation will be excluded from any future papers or research reports that will be written based on this research. Any tapes or recordings will be destroyed at the end of this project. You will not receive any payment for your contributions. You may, on request, be a recipient of a copy of the completed study. This research has been approved by the University of South Africa.

If you have any questions about the ethical process or material of the research, please feel free to contact me, or my supervisor, for clarification.

Research Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant:

As stated above I am fully aware of the nature and scope of my participation in this project. I understand the potential risks related to it. I hereby agree to participate, and I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant                      Date and Time

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title / Position / Occupation of Participant                      Venue

## **Appendix 2: Interview guide**

### **1. Participant Background**

- 1.1. Name of the municipality.....
- 1.2. Your job designation/position .....
- 1.3. Department/Section.....
- 1.4. Your gender (To be used for statistics).....(b) Race..... (c) Age.....
- 1.5. What is your level of formal education.....?
- 1.6. How long have you worked for your organisation.....?

### **2. Understanding the knowledge sharing concept in NDM**

- 2.1. What is your understanding of knowledge sharing concept in a local government (municipal) setting?
  - 2.1.1. Do you think effective knowledge sharing can improve service delivery in your municipality?
- 2.2. Do you consider yourself to know what your colleagues' know?
- 2.3. What would encourage you to share the knowledge that you have acquired if necessary? Is it organisational, culture, rewards, trust, leadership and ICT platforms? (kindly explain).
  - 2.3.1. Do you think organisational culture, rewards, structure, trust, leadership & ICT may contribute to employee's willingness to share knowledge?

### **3. Knowledge sharing practices**

- 3.1. Are there any existing structures in your municipality and across the NDM municipalities that define knowledge sharing processes such as Communities of Practice (CoPs), forums or knowledge sharing opportunities?
  - 3.1.1. If there are structures available, do you think the discussions that take place contribute to the objectives of the organisation to improve its operations?

- 3.2. Are there current strategies & programmes in place in your municipality such as mentoring, storytelling, newsletters etc. to ensure that knowledge is shared and transferred amongst staff members within your municipality as well as the six local municipalities?
- 3.3. In which ways do you ensure the flow of knowledge amongst staff members in your sections as well as the other municipalities in NDM?
- 3.4. Which are the existing policies responsible for sharing/non-sharing of knowledge in the organisation?
- 3.5. Do you think your municipality has the necessary information communication technology infrastructure, such as the Intranet, weblogs, emails, document systems, social media platforms, etc. to support knowledge sharing?

#### **4. Challenges for knowledge sharing**

- 4.1. Which of the following would you consider to be the contributing factor of poor knowledge sharing in your municipality: organisational culture, structure, leadership, trust, ICT?
  - 4.2. What challenges do you consider to be contributing to ineffective knowledge sharing activities among the other local municipalities in the NDM?
5. Would you suggest strategies that may help your municipality and the other local municipalities within NDM to optimally share knowledge, which will lead to improvement of service delivery?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**



